CHILD STUDY

A JOURNAL OF PARENT EDUCATION

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HEADLINES

This issue of CHILD STUDY was sponsored and planned by the Association's Children's Book Committee under the chairmanship of Mrs. Hugh Grant Straus.

The contributors to this issue are interested in children's reading from widely different angles. Mabel Williams is superintendent of work with schools in the New York Public Library. She is chairman of the "Book Committee for Young People" whose special task it is to guide young readers from the shelter of the Children's Room to the "great open shelves" of the adult reading rooms. Lula E. Wright is concerned with much younger readers, as second grade teacher at Lincoln School. She is one of a group of educators working on a new type of picture-script books for beginning readers. Irma Doniger, as librarian in a crowded section of Newark, N. J., has had an opportunity to watch and guide the reading interests of the children of working-class parents. Josette Frank, staff advisor to the Association's Children's Book Committee, knows the parents' problems in connection with children's reading. Dr. Jerome L. Kohn is a pediatrician in New York City.

The department of Readers' Slants offers some fresh and undimmed impressions of several young people just out of their teens, concerning their own childhood reading, with some concluding reflections from Dorothy Canfield Fisher.

THE EDITORS' PAGE

READING has come to be a significant part of daily living, and not merely an accomplishment for ornamental purposes, or an indulgence for rare leisure moments. One of the distinctive features of present-day culture is the rapid accumulation of new experiences, new knowledge, new insights. To these the child must have access in terms of his own maturity and interests. He must keep abreast of what his age is dreaming and doing; he must also keep in touch with what his contemporaries are thinking. To both needs the books he reads make a substantial contribution.

WE may think of books as instruments for many other laudable purposes. Books can inform; but they can also be excellent without any informative value. Books can amuse; and if they accomplish that, though they accomplish no more, they have served a purpose. Books can stimulate; but not every book need be stimulating. Books open up to the child the world of human nature, of human conduct and relationships, as does no other resource. They extend his vision and understanding immeasurably beyond anything possible through direct experience and observation. The books of the child, as well as his own early experiences, go toward building up opinions and prejudices. But it is also through further reading that these bigotries and provincialisms are likely to be overcome.

THE important thing is to leave the road open. To insist upon reading in advance of experience and ideas is to make the use of books distasteful. There are many children, of course, who can run far beyond practical experience by means of books, through their ability to form images, and to think abstractly, and there is no reason why, in their case, reading should be limited arbitrarily. This is not to say that we are to abandon everything to predestination, or to the fatalism of the geneticists. Reading as behavior is at least in part determined by the "background" and experience of the particular child at the given moment. And books and reading are important factors in the further growth of backgrounds. We value reading for its enriching and supplementing of experience, but we must recognize that its effects never operate in a vacuum.

IN the case of adolescents especially, everything worth reading should be opened up to them. Boys and girls should be encouraged to find out for themselves what is available and what is of greatest worth to them. Above all would I open to them the opportunity to find out what our contemporaries are thinking about the problems that most deeply concern young people. We can safely take it for granted that if their tastes and standards have been cultivated during the earlier years, they will in their youth be able to read extensively, through a range wide in literary merit as well as in subject matter, and to allot their thought and interest with growing discrimination.

Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg

Growing Up to Read

By JOSETTE FRANK

THE love of good books is one of those attributes which reading parents think of as a "cultural heritage" for their children. Many of us have fond recollections of our own childhood reading—have even, perhaps, treasured browned volumes of our childhood favorites which we can hardly wait to place, with almost holy ceremony, in the eager young hands of our growing offspring.

It comes to us as something of a shock, therefore, when these hands fail to be "eager." During the children's earliest years we have been the sole arbiters of what has reached their ears—and they have listened gladly to whatever we chose to read them. Nor is it a difficult task to choose excellent read-aloud tales from among the magnificent array of available books for the young child. It is when our children grow up to read for themselves that the parental control of their reading meets some snags. It is then we discover that reading tastes are not governed by the laws of inheritance. It becomes apparent that the children have a way of liking what they like, with disconcerting disregard to our tastes or even our feelings.

For the development of reading interests is part and parcel of the growing up process. In certain respects and at certain stages it may be expected to follow certain norms. But in certain respects it may go in unpredictable ways. We may generalize, and truly, that at five and six children are interested in reading about other children and animals and everyday happenings; that seven and eight are the height of the fairy-tale age, that at ten boys want adventure stories while girls want *Little Women* and such. But as in other growth processes, we find that the best of "norms" do not always apply. What, for example, is the "right age" for *Alice in Wonderland?* There are children who love it at six, others at sixteen—some never. There are children who are not amused by *Winnie-the-Pooh*. There are girls of ten who cannot bear *Heidi* and all its ilk of "little girl" stories, so adored by other ten-year-olds.

All of this comes hard to the parent who sees her child missing these treasures and pleasures of reading—or, worse still, spending valuable reading hours on the "Big Little Books" of the five-and-ten when there are so many "good" books waiting to be read. We are tempted to intercede, to urge our list of "musts" before it is too late, and more especially to banish the crude intruders absorbing our children's reading-time. But neither "musts" nor "mustn'ts" will avail us much, since reading interests derive from something deeper than obedience.

We will, perhaps, save ourselves many heartaches if we think of our children's reading not in terms of "culture" but rather as an avenue of satisfaction for each according to his needs. Their spontaneous choices may even serve as indices of these needs, by which we may the better guide their reading. For guidance they do need, if they are to find their way to real experiences in the world of books. Children may know what they want—or they may think they know—but it still remains for adults to open up to them the rich stores of available reading beyond what they know how to ask for.

New Worlds to Conquer

• One little girl of nine, a confirmed addict of fairy tales to whom all "fact books" were anathema, one day discovered (with adult help) *The Story of Earth and Sky*. She hung over it in breathless absorption: "This is just like a fairy tale except that this might have been true!" And the wonders of the real world came from that day to replace, or at least to compete with, the fairy world for her reading interest. So also a young realist of eight who clamored for more and more books of information—boats, airplanes, engines—fell under the spell of Macdonald's *Princess and the Goblin* and discovered hitherto unguessed planes of action beyond the reaches of science. Here, too, it needed an alert adult to introduce the Princess to this child—else he might never have discovered that he liked fairy tales!

The question is not whether fairy tales are more nutritious literary fare than fact books, or the reverse, but whether the child can find in his reading an ever-increasing satisfaction of his own inner needs and

drives. Often, too, we may find in the child's choice of reading clues to needs and interests hitherto unguessed, to difficulties and problems calling for special insight and help.

It is not *what* the child reads, but *why*, that is significant. Some will seek, in their reading, to increase their store of information about the world they live in; others to experience vicariously the thrills which the boundaries of every-day living preclude. Still others seek outlets for their own emotions, for which no expression is permissible in social living: impulses of cruelty, perhaps, or of self-pity, of heroism and personal prowess, or of thirst for power and grandeur.

Fairy Tales Restored to Grace

• It is the satisfaction of many of these needs that the traditional folk and fairy tales serve. The validity of this kind of "safety-valve" reading, for children old enough to "take it," is being recognized by psychiatrists and psychologists who have reversed their earlier condemnation of fairy tales as unwholesome "wish fulfillment." Educators, too, no longer fear lest children's character and morals will be colored by acquaintance with the crude and elemental in human nature, keynote of the great folk literature of the world. And parents have discovered for themselves that the children are not so easily shocked (are perhaps *pleasurably* terrified!) by the callous treacheries and casual killings in their folk tales.

In protest against the tendency to "denature" the literature we give our children, Anna W. M. Wolf says:

"There is a doleful tendency in children's literature, hastening it toward a realm of sweetness and light, in which only the good, the pure, the beautiful, and the wholesome are to be recognized. The question we ask ourselves is whether our children are never to be permitted, even in literature, to *feel* hate and anger, or to *experience* the love of power, aggression, and revenge. When, and to what extent should parents sanction, when and to what extent deny the validity of such experience? Folk tales concern themselves eternally with the emotional verities, and from this source derive their peculiar power to charm the human race. Civilized adults may shudder at two children shoving an old woman to her death in an oven. But to the naïve mind of the child, such an act is merely the joyful achievement of the desire to punish and remove the bothersome adult who denies him his sugar-plum world. . . .

"We can only raise the question whether the rank and file of children cannot assimilate without harm and use with profit—Grimm and all—a literary diet emotionally more virile than we give them today."*

A Place for Fact Books

• Some children turn to reading for interpretation of the physical world they live in rather than for emotional catharsis. These will find a whole new literature that has grown up within recent years to meet this need. There are books about everything, from the skyscraper to the kitchen sink, most of them informational, some of them also inspirational, stimulating the young reader to do some observing and questing of his own. One danger of these fact books lies not in the books themselves—many of which excellently serve their purpose—but in the tendency of parents to accord to books of information a glorified place in the child's reading. There seems to be a devout parental belief that these and these only among children's books, are "educational"—that these, above all others, are "good for" children.

One mother, scanning the shelves of new books for her twelve-year-old's Christmas, sought the assistance of the sales-clerk.

"What kind of books does he like?" was the natural question.

"Oh," said the mother with a deprecative gesture, "He *likes* mystery stories or adventure stories with a lot of fighting in them. But I certainly won't give him such things. I intend to get him something *worth while*"—and she moved to the counter marked "Books of Information."

Let us not be misled into confusing information with education, nor delimiting education as a deluge of facts. May not *Tom Sawyer* be just as "educational" as a book about airplanes? And how shall we expect a book on travel, or machinery, or skyscrapers to satisfy the adventure-thirsty twelve-year-old? Furthermore, let us be clear as to the place of fact literature in the child's reading diet. No fact book will create a specific interest in a given child. Rather its legitimate purpose is to serve and stimulate interests which are already kindled.

What of the "Classics"?

• Another point on which parents and children are likely to disagree is the reading of the "classics." In our anxiety lest our children miss the literary gems of our own childhood, we are in danger of losing our focus upon the modern child's reading needs. For one thing, we forget that these venerable books

* "Denatured Literature," by Anna W. M. Wolf in CHILD STUDY, Jan., 1933.

(many of them written for adults and not for children at all) were almost the only reading available to us in our childhood, barring some few sentimental goody books that are now beneath notice! Today there is available to young people a wealth of really good reading—unheard of in our own youth—of books addressed to their own level of interest and appreciation. Then, too, if we consider the tempo of the modern child's day, as well as the tempo of his movie-made entertainment, we will understand why *Deerslayer* and *Scottish Chiefs, Lorna Doone* and the novels of Jane Austin are passed by for swifter tales. Not all of the "classics" go unread, however, as evidenced by the well-thumbed volumes of *Treasure Island, Tom Sawyer, David Copperfield, Hans Brinker, Little Women,* and many others on the shelves of the public library. It is true that in the deluge of new and ever newer books, there is a likelihood that some of the fine old tales will be overlooked—and we must be mindful to move them forward to the child's own bookshelf at the right time. (The children may not share our sentimental attachment for our old childhood editions—modern printing makes reading so much easier!) At the same time we need not feel too pained if some of our old favorites meet with reverses at the hands of our modern-minded young readers. Many of these books reflect standards, ideals, ways of life so different from today's experiences that our children find them altogether unreal and unconvincing. And if they do miss some of the best of the old they will also have many of the fine new books which we lacked. It is not what they miss but what they get from their reading that matters.

The Inevitable "Series Books"

• But perhaps the most difficult hurdle for the literary-minded parent is the advent of the series books. Even those of us who have accepted with fair grace the fact that we cannot make the children read what we like are dismayed to discover that neither can we keep them from reading what we do *not* like. In vain we try to point out to them our objections: these books are really poor stuff, their plots are impossible, their characters unreal, their language crude. In short, they are certainly not "elevating," and, what is worse, they waste valuable hours that might be spent on more profitable reading.

It is in our interpretation of "profitable" that the children beg to differ. Certainly in these books they are finding something that is at the moment of value *to them:* vicarious thrills, excitement, escape from the hampering restrictions of daily living, even, perhaps, relief from the effort demanded by "good reading." Sometimes, too, their very ease of reading makes for a fluency which later carries over to the reading of weightier literature. For children do recover from the series books. Like measles they are passed from child to child, and like measles, too, they run their course, bringing their own immunity. We can afford to wait, but while we are waiting we can bring to their attention (not too urgently!) some really good books of adventure and romance—and there are many such. Sooner or later they will come to these, and they will discover that adventure is not less exciting because it is labeled "good literature." Perhaps they will continue to read trash, too, as which of us does not? Perhaps their tastes will never coincide with our own. But reading the good with the bad they will learn for themselves to discriminate, to find what is of interest to them at the moment, and to recognize differences.

The Comics

• A word about that other perversity in the reading tastes of the young: their devotion to comics. Perhaps this is the only type of reading enjoyment which may safely be said to be universal—*all* children love the "funnies." Why? Adults may properly deplore their crudity, their emphasis on the rude and brutal in human nature, their offenses against good taste, good English, good manners. Yet, however unacceptable they may be to us, the comic strips continue to appeal to children, and for valid reasons. For here is action, swift, sudden, effective, and usually unexpected. But most important as a source of satisfaction is the fact that in the comics children (or grown-ups) usually do something which the young reader is himself forbidden to do—and swift retribution follows. May it not be that the reader here experiences vicariously both the pleasure of transgressing and the expiation of his guilt feelings via the pictured culprit who is punished?

The enjoyment of the crude is one of the stages through which the child comes to more mature and discriminating appreciations. The very "low" nature of the comic-strip characters and their language may be, in a sense, a safety valve, affording needed relief from the refining pressures imposed by adults whose standards are still too high for children's comfort.

We need not fear the damaging effects of these assaults upon our children's taste and morality. Char-

acter does not develop overnight; manners and morals are not so lightly made. If the vices were so easily acquired, would it not also be a simple matter to inculcate the virtues by means of highly moralistic stories? Yet this has been tried since time immemorial—from Æsop to the Goops—with no marked success. The children of a few generations ago were permitted only those little books which preached a most obvious moral—that children who were good, and obeyed their elders, would assuredly be rewarded, even though the reward often consisted, in these saintly books, of the dubious glory of dying young! Yet there is no evidence that the moral teaching of these books was effective. And children are no more likely to emulate the bad than the good in what they read.

How then are we to help our children to make the most of their reading, to develop standards of taste and appreciation that will both broaden and deepen their pleasure in books?

True pleasure in books can come only when reading is a real experience, not just a pursuit of culture or literary appreciation. Let us abandon any preconceived patterns of "what the well-read child should read" and be guided, instead, by what, at the moment, our particular child is seeking in his reading. Let us watch his developing interests without prejudice or censure but with an eye to the growth possibilities that lie therein. And let us be ready and willing (and equipped) to offer him those books that stem from his own growth needs and experiences and lead on toward widening horizons.

The Children's First Books

By LULA E. WRIGHT

WE all treasure for our small children whatever adds to their gayety and fun, or contributes to their courage and understanding. For the bewildering world of which they are a part seems always to increase in complexity and insecurity.

So we would have them in their growing up and living, take for their own and make a part of themselves whatever wisdom or nonsense they may, that has been contributed by those of the earth who are most sensitive to what is fine and beautiful, or who have felt most deeply, and who have the clearest vision.

These have been the poets and artists who have expressed themselves in unique and unforgettable ways—who have opened our eyes and our hearts to things we otherwise would not have seen, who have disciplined our imaginations and ennobled our sympathies.

Of the poets who have sung their way into the hearts of children, no other has given verse of such mysterious loveliness and beauty as Walter de la Mare.

"Someone came knocking at my wee small door
Someone came knocking, I'm sure, sure, sure."

and

"Ann, Ann,
Come quick as you can
There's a fish that talks
In the frying pan."

and

"I heard a horseman
Ride over the hill
The moon shone clear
The night was still.
His helm was silver
And pale was he;
And the horse he rode
Was of ivory."

Milne, too, with his irresistible rhythms, his gay and gentle humor, his appealing and lovable absurdities, his "Christopher" and "Pooh" and "Piglet," his "Kings," and his "Foxes with Their Soxes," has found a sure and loving place in the hearts of children everywhere. If he appeals to grown-ups at the same time, that is not to the discredit of his poetry. And it is the artistry of Christopher's illustrator, E. H. Shephard, that has made his image take on a clear and unforgettable form.

Then there are also today the childlike, lovely, rhyming, imaginative things of Rose Fyleman, of

Elizabeth Coatsworth, Eleanor Farjeon, Sara Teasdale, Annette Wyne, Nancy Byrd Turner. Wisdom and pure nonsense and understanding are all given by these in the happiest way.

There is Elizabeth Madox Roberts who brings the breath of country air in her sensitive pictures of *The Hens, At Milking Time, The Rabbits.*

There is Rachel Field with her colorful:

"Ho for Taxies blue and green
Ho for Taxies red."

James Tippett with his:

"Wait a minute, green bus
Slow down, stop."

and

"Over the river, over the bay
Ferry boats travel every day."

And Dorothy Aldis, whose humorous and charming verse appeals even down to the littlest ones in the nursery school.

"If I had a spoon
As tall as the sky
I'd dish up the clouds
That go slip-sliding by."

These last named writers all illuminate and add joy to the things in everyday life—all of them with the exception of Elizabeth Madox Roberts—turning mostly to the boats, trains, trucks, airplanes, parks, houses, stores, and markets of the city for their inimitable word pictures.

Old Favorites, Too

• Of our older poets, the singing lyrics of Robert Louis Stevenson and Christina Rosetti must not be missed. And children need more than we realize the tonic life-giving humor and gayety of the classic nonsense verse and limericks. The greatest of the nonsense makers are Edward Lear, Lewis Carrol, Laura E. Richards, with her recently added *Tirra Lirra,* and Mother Goose. We will have with us always the comical dramatic lilting rhymes of Mother Goose, although undoubtedly some of them are already passing outside the experiences of our modern children.

We are growing away from the feeling that what has served one generation must necessarily contribute to the next. For while human nature changes little, the conditions of living present startling differences and changes, and necessarily affect the experiences and interests of the succeeding generations of children. No longer do we class as literature for children anything that does not serve in giving pleasure and understanding. "Any writing, old or new, becomes literature for children only when they can bring to the reading experiences which contribute to an understanding and a proper interpretation of, as well as pleasure in, what is being read."* Of course, to be classed as literature it will contain all of the elements necessary to literature—worthwhile content, "rhythm, design, unique insight, and the perfect picturing of thought and feeling." **

We are turning aside from the moralistic, the sentimental, and symbolic in literature for young children. This is true in stories as well as in poetry. The place of the old moralistic and the grotesquely fanciful tale has been taken by wholesome stories of everyday life, by more appropriate simpler imaginative tales, by stories of the work of the world, and by increasingly more and more beautiful picture stories and picture books.

Marjorie Flack, Lois Lenski, Wanda Gag, Elsa Beskow, Maj Lindman, Dorothy and Marguerite Bryan, have given some of the loveliest and most popular of these for the youngest children. Helen Bannerman of *Black Sambo* fame happily has a new *Black Sambo and the Twins* out this fall.

"We need to keep the best of the old and add to it the best of the new for literature must reflect life and to reflect it truly, it must keep pace with our ever-changing world."†

Shared Reading

• And lastly, let the love for and delight in books come through long years and glorious hours of adults and children together. Let the verse and stories be shared in sympathetic communion until the spoken language of poets and artists has sung itself into the vivid awareness of the children. Then, and not until then, will they be ready to read it for themselves.

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* "Literature and the Child," by Blanche E. Weekes. Silver Burdett.
** "Childhood's Own Literature" in Creative Expression, by Hughes Mearns. John Day.
† "First Experiences with Literature," Alice Dalgliesh.

Bridging the Gulf to Adult Reading

By MABEL WILLIAMS

THERE should be no gulf nor need of a bridge in the journey from nursery rhymes, fairy tales, myths, legends, and all existing good children's books to adult reading. If there is a gulf it is probably because the individual has failed in early years to make books a normal natural part of everyday living. It is very difficult to make up for the lack of this early background.

Jerusha Abbott in Jean Webster's *Daddy-Long-Legs* found this true. In one of her letters she writes, "I have a new unbreakable rule: never, never to study at night. . . . Instead, I read just plain books—I have to, you know, because there are eighteen blank years behind me. . . . The things that most girls with a properly assorted family and a home and friends and a library know by absorption, I have never heard of. . . . I never read *Mother Goose* or *David Copperfield* or *Ivanhoe* or *Cinderella* or *Blue Beard* or *Robinson Crusoe* or *Jane Eyre* or *Alice in Wonderland* or a word of Rudyard Kipling. . . . I didn't know that R. L. S. stood for Robert Louis Stevenson or that George Eliot was a lady. I had never seen a picture of the Mona Lisa and (it's true, but you won't believe it) I had never heard of Sherlock Holmes.

"One book isn't enough. I have four going at once. Just now, they're Tennyson's poems and *Vanity Fair* and Kipling's *Plain Tales* and—don't laugh—*Little Women*. I haven't told anybody, though (that would stamp me as queer). I just quietly went and bought it with $1.12 of my last month's allowance; and the next time somebody mentions pickled limes, I'll know what she is talking about. . . ."

No adult interested in guiding a young person's reading can find a made-to-order plan that will bring a desired result. "For the only certain thing about reading is that it is personal first, personal second, and personal all the time, and Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* may be the dominating peaks of a glorious range, but they are nothing to you whatever if you happen to be looking the other way."*

Parents are inclined to become agitated if their children are not meeting some artificial standard in reading fixed by educators. Hughes Mearns describes such a parent: "When a mother wrote asking for a private consultation on a very serious matter concerning her twelve-year-old boy I was prepared for many intimate disclosures, but not for her nervous and almost tearful ejaculation, 'My son reads nothing but the *Motor Boat Boys,* one after another, and then begins the series all over again. What is to be done about it?'

"My answer did not please her at all. 'Nothing need be done about it,' I assured her. 'It is a normal, healthy sign. Be thankful that he reads at all.'

" 'But we are a literary family!' she cried, annoyed at my light attitude. 'We read the best books. He is surrounded by—everything; but he just will not look at anything but the *Motor Boat Boys,* and we've tried both punishment and money to make him stop.'

"She represented a common worry of literary mothers, who do not seem to understand that taste is a matter of normal growth, that it has its juvenile stage as well as its adult stage, and that, like all growth, it cannot be uprooted or transplanted at will without danger. . . .

"I could show the mother how the girls had gone through their *Campfire Girls' Larks and Pranks* and the boys their *Boy Scouts in the Philippines* to emerge five years later with an unaffected delight in George Meredith's *The Egoist* and George Bernard Shaw's *Cæsar and Cleopatra.*" *

How Adults May Help

It would seem that the best course for an adult to follow in guiding the reading of youth is:

1. Avoid forming fixed standards of reading achievement.
2. Have faith in the normal, natural growth of taste in reading.
3. See that boys and girls are constantly "exposed" to good books—in the home, the school, and the public library.
4. Expect young people to express their rapidly changing interests and tastes through the books they select.

* Walpole, Hugh. Reading. Harper, 1920.

* Mearns, Hughes. *Creative Power.* Doubleday, 1929.

5. Express a non-critical interest in the reading of young people so that they will never hesitate to discuss the books they are reading.

One boy found May Lamberton Becker's *Adventures in Reading* his bridge to adult reading. His first roommate at boarding school was quite an advanced reader while he was still in the "series" stage. An aunt sent him *Adventures in Reading* which was just the guide he needed to help him catch up with his roommate whom he greatly admired.

Mrs. Becker's book is outstanding in that it presents reading to the young people themselves in a lively natural way. It was written in 1927 and the reading lists could well be revised, but the text still has a sprightly modern flavor. The book is dedicated "to my daughter with whose reading I never interfered." Mrs. Becker doesn't preach but is not afraid to speak her mind.

"What you read in your teens is important not only in itself but for what it induces you to read next. Some books lead into better books, some into books not so good. If you read the first sort your taste will grow steadily better, but the second may make it steadily worse.

"I shall take no space to tell you what not to read; I need it all to share with you some of my experiences with books that have helped me to develop discrimination, and that may help you to develop a taste for the best, so that what is not so good will not taste so well. Discrimination comes gradually, and good habits in reading are all based on the development of discrimination, on the training of your judgment so that you select for yourself the books that you need for mental and spiritual growth, for the enrichment of your life. You can't have someone choosing books for you forever; it is your business to begin to train yourself for judicious choosing. . . ."*

There are available several book lists selected for the teen age. The "reluctant" reader is somewhat impervious to lists, as is also the independent reader, but there are many boys and girls who are eager to know the books enjoyed by their contemporaries. Such books are indicated in the following lists:

Books for Youth, compiled by Cecile J. Lynch and Sarah A. Beard, and published by the Brooklyn Public Library, is a list for the high school age. It is attractive in appearance and discriminating in selection. A supplement was published in January, 1936.

Books for Young People is compiled by The Book Committee for Young People of the New York Public Library and is published annually in the January number of the Branch Library Book News. Assurance of annual publication permits this list to offer a close reflection of the current reading interests and habits of boys and girls in New York City between the ages of 14 and 16 years.

What Shall We Read Next, compiled by Jean C. Roos of the Cleveland Public Library is a list suggesting a program of reading sequences for young people between the ages of 15 and 19 years. For example, Laing's *Sea Witch,* Villiers' *Grain Race,* and Conrad's *Typhoon* are suggested as sequences after reading Masefield's *Bird of Dawning.*

There are two lists prepared by the National Council of Teachers of English—*Leisure Reading,* a list for the 7th, 8th, and 9th years, and *Home Reading,* a list for senior high school. These lists are extensive rather than selective and are generously illustrated with cuts from book illustrations.

The Child Study Association publishes, annually, a selected annotated list, *Books of the Year for Children.*

Where the Public Library Is Needed

• So far the discussion has been concerned with boys and girls who have book interests in their home environment; but it is also true that many young people are quite without encouragement to read in their homes.

Some of them, impelled by their own questioning, alert spirits, have found reading one of their great pleasures. To others, a book brings no thrill of anticipation, no sense of a new adventure begun.

The community should do for these readers what the intelligent parent does for his child. Expose them to good books, and provide them with teachers and librarians who are capable of sharing their own pleasure in reading.

In the public library we find one large group unable to bridge the gulf to adult reading because they are not capable of reading adult books. Teachers of English in our high schools have discovered this also and are developing methods of measuring and improving reading ability. Meanwhile, librarians are trying to cull from their shelves books which these young people *can* read, and to make these volumes more accessible.

* Becker, May Lamberton. *Adventures in Reading.* Stokes, 1927.

It is difficult for some parents, teachers, and librarians to allow young people freedom to make their own way in the field of adult reading. And yet our own youthful memories and the repeated testimony of youth today prove the futility of censorship. Certain books are then read surreptitiously and never discussed freely, and thus is destroyed the best safeguard against the possible harm to immature minds of reading beyond their experience.

"Is it then a matter of progressive steps, this laying fresh hold upon literature as part of life and living? Given certain specified interests, inclinations, and tendencies, is it possible to reduce to formula and lists this matter of reading in childhood and in the teens—to say which subjects shall be open and when, which subjects closed and why? . . .

"A frank determination to know all that can happen to human beings in books or in life is quite different from a prurient curiosity. Feeling under the obligation myself, I have never been shocked to find other boys and girls similarly impelled to find out all that they can. Tragedy lies, I think, not in knowing too much but rather in not knowing enough to think things through. Just here the great classics seem to me veritable soul preservers. . . ."*

Cheap and Trashy Literature

• As for cheap and trashy literature exemplified by some of the pulp magazines, the community need no more tolerate easy access to them than it need endure undesirable motion pictures. While public opinion is doing something about this, parents, teachers, and librarians should be campaigning to increase the supply of good reading at home, in the school, and in the public library.

The real problem in the face of present community conditions is the boy or girl who never voluntarily reads anything but pulp magazines and tabloids. Usually these young people have not been exposed to good books as they have to cheap magazines. Good taste has not developed because it has had only the mediocre to feed upon.

Since sharing book experiences with young people is important in bridging the gulf to adult reading, fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts may be glad to know some of the recent books that have built the bridge for one librarian.

In the field of personal narratives, *North to the Orient* by Ann Lindbergh is ideal in its qualifications. Genuine admiration for the author and her husband, and the physical appearance of the book—an inviting page as to print with the fascinating map headpieces drawn by Mr. Lindbergh—will attract any boy or girl. The subjects to be shared in reading this book are varied, covering Flying, Radio, Weather, Foreign Travel, and finally, the ability of the author to interpret scientific and practical things through the imagination and with a never failing sense of humor.

Audubon, by Constance Rourke, also attracts with a page inviting to the eye and reproductions in color of twelve of Audubon's bird plates which are a triumph for the art of printing. We travel with the author in the footsteps of Audubon as his genius drives him to remote corners of America searching for his rare bird models. Left with us is a surprisingly vivid picture of the man himself through the analysis of his art. Of great "sharing" value is the slight reference to the legend that Audubon may have been Louis XVII of France, the Lost Dauphin!

As with so many books one introduces another, and Constance Rourke's *Audubon* may easily lead to Donald Peattie's *Singing in the Wilderness,* a more impressionistic and poetic life of the same man.

Through Nora Waln's *House of Exile,* the provocative subject of the contrast between life in the Orient and life in our own country is introduced. The now famous review of the book by Alexander Woollcott in which he questioned the ignoring of unpleasant aspects of Chinese life, and the spirited defense by Nora Waln's daughter, send us searching for other viewpoints. *My Country and My People,* by Lin Yutang is one possibility.

Adults who have placed Lincoln Steffens' *Autobiography* high on their list of favorites will have little difficulty in sharing *A Boy on Horseback,* which is the first eighteen chapters of the book reprinted for young people.

And how about detective stories? Many adults are already expert in this field of reading. Shall this mutual interest be ignored or shared through such books as *Great Detective Stories* by W. H. Wright and *Sleuths* by Kenneth MacGowan? Historical fiction also has great possibilities since it is definitely a reading interest of young people.

"Book-sharing" will by no means be limited to modern literature, but will follow unpredictable paths depending on the treasuries stored up by the adult through past years of reading and upon his skill in relating great literature, which is ageless, to the young people of today.

* Moore, Ann Carroll. *Crossroads to Childhood.* Doran, 1926.

Our Protected Children

By IRMA DONIGER

IT IS pleasant to consider that although, throughout the ages, adults have attempted to pigeon-hole The Child in a world of their creating, children have continued to concern themselves cheerfully with the essential realities of existence.

In our own American past parents made prodigious attempts to enclose their young in a sealed world of piety, industry, and learning. While the weaker ones died of vague and mysterious afflictions, the hardy ones survived, resisting the best efforts of their elders to force them to be little adults.

With the years, however, came the inevitable pendulum swing. Childhood quite definitely came into its own. It came to be considered not only a definite and more primitive process in human development but a separate *state of existence*. While this was doubtless a progressive step, it had its own evils, for it gave rise to the popular belief that children themselves wander vaguely about in a sort of wonderland of their own, made up of English nurseries, Pooh Corners, and Kensington Gardens after lock-up time. But here again we find that children are their own best defenders. Ignoring the set of interests and values imposed upon them from above, they seem infinitely more concerned with Daddy's job, and airplanes, and the riveters across the street, than with Tinker Bell, or even Peter himself.

A refreshing change in attitude, on the part of progressive educators, in the matter of the child's need for participating in the realities of the world about him, has come about in the last few years. In the field of children's literature, however, the social and economic realities are still considered to have no place in "creative" writing for children, and are definitely relegated to their place in books of information and photographic picture books.

There is still a large and vocal school of thought that advances the opinion that magic and make-believe are the proper concern of children, that children themselves are definitely a race apart from other human beings, and somehow insulated from the hardships that beset the rest of us. Recently one of our most distinguished critics of children's books, acclaimed the arrival of *Mary Poppins* (a delightful bit of English whimsy) on behalf of the children "of the 1930's, that curious, self-conscious era of the depression, when childhood rallying once more to its own defense, declares its inalienable right to a good time, *whatever may be going on in the world at large.*" (The italics are mine.)

Now this theory that "whatever may be going on in the world at large" children will and should escape into a fantasy world where the realities of daily existence cannot touch them, is harmless enough when it is applied to reading for *young* children. But unfortunately much of our literature of today for older boys and girls is also of the escape variety, consciously or unconsciously dedicated to protecting the children from too intimate contact with stern realities.

Facing Reality

• The emotion that leads adults to shield children from the more brutal facts of our present-day civilization is comprehensible enough. Brutal they are, even for us to face, with economic insecurity on every hand, and the war threat constantly hovering over us—a world that seems to have no place for the youth now coming of age. But we cannot prepare children to face the future with adequacy by turning their eyes resolutely in the direction of Never-never land and the Covered Wagon. What makes the problem still more urgent is the fact that children themselves are becoming increasingly aware of the realities of our world, particularly the economic ones, and are asking questions which we are not prepared to answer, least of all through the medium of children's books. We decry the subversive effects of movies, radio, and confession magazines, conscious of the warped picture of reality which they give, but we have little to offer as a substitute.

Analyze the books of the last six years, that "curious, self-conscious era of the depression," and determine to what extent it has been reflected in children's books! Most of the products of the depression years might well have been written on the planet Mars, for all the picture of the world as it is recreated therein. It was, of course, inevitable that some news of the most prolonged financial crisis in history, a crisis which affected the lives of all of us, should trickle down into children's books, a few of which do at-

tempt to portray girls and boys of today. In *Shanty Ann* by Grace Moon, for example, we have a picture of a peculiarly American depression phenomenon, the "Hooverville." But what a rosy picture of these colonies of the dispossessed does Mrs. Moon present! The child reader must not for a moment imagine that life in a shack made up of oil tins salvaged from a neighboring dump was anything but a lark for Ann. It should also be noted that the author's solution to the economic problem involved lies in Ann's finding a roll of bills of large denominations, which she returns to the local banker who had lost them. Writers for children are still treating of poverty in terms of the poor-but-happy, or rags-to-riches approach, which characterized *The Five Little Peppers* school of literature.

The depression came in for brief mention too in stories of what are sometimes called the upper classes. *Miss Nancy Prentiss* for example, was one of a multitude which treated it as a brief but annoying interlude, which threatened to keep our young heroines or heroes, as the case might be, out of boarding school.

The author of *Nancy* and *Miss Nancy Prentiss,* Miss Wasson, seems to be one of the more promising writers of "girls' stories." She knows the young people of this era, particularly those of the country club genre, and it might reasonably be supposed that she could have reflected some of their thinking on the matter—for they *are* thinking. But beyond stepfather's little sermon to Nancy to the effect that "hard times . . . are your job, just as the war was the lot of my crowd," etc., there is nothing.

It Can Be Done

• In the midst of this sort of polite evasion it is a relief to come upon the rare children's writer who has succeeded in approaching economic and social problems realistically, yet creatively, imaginatively. No one could possibly dismiss *Linnet on the Threshold,* or *Bend in the Road,* by Margaret Raymond, as mere social tract. Yet in *Linnet on the Threshold* Miss Raymond manages to give a very honest picture of a home which has its counterpart in every American city and town—a home oppressed by poverty and privation, darkened by conflicts between the despairing, nagging mother, the futile, defeated father, and the young girl forced out of school into menial jobs when she knows she is capable of better things. Yet Linnet is real and alive as few of our boarding school heroines are, and although she refuses to face poverty with cheerful acceptance, she does keep her chin up, and in the words of one young reader "she gets places, after all, doesn't she?" In *Bend in the Road* the author deals even more concretely with social and economic realities. Conditions in the factory where Martha works, the crowded apartment where she lives, are not at all prettified. Wage cuts and firings, Martha's own dismissal for naively suggesting a cooperative plan to the management, bitter misunderstanding between the foreign-born father and his "American" daughter—all this may seem to us strong fare for children brought up on fairy bread, but not to the children themselves, oddly enough. Both books are extremely popular, and constantly in demand in school and public libraries.

Are Any Books "Innocuous"?

• Many parents will no doubt shy away from books with a point of view so decided as that of Miss Raymond in favor of something more "innocuous." We all realize, from bitter experience, how difficult it is to measure the degree to which children are influenced by occurrences which adults consider trifling. So with children's reading. In their very acceptance of things as they are, their insistence upon the conservative values, super-patriotism, adulation of success for its own sake, their condescension toward the poor, the Negro, the foreign born, these "innocuous" little stories often preach a doctrine of reaction more insidious than the most bare-faced propaganda.

An episode in *Tangle Garden* illustrates this danger. Two children try to help a needy family who promptly invest the new-found money in an illegal still. We need only add that the family is foreign born to complete the picture. The children are sadder and wiser for their experiment in philanthropy, which reveals the poor as only "chiselers" after all.

One of the most respected authors of school and sport stories is William Heyliger. Of late he has taken to writing "success" stories on the Horatio Alger pattern, reaffirming all the old shibboleths about early rising, industry, and a little native shrewdness being the prime requisites for success. Often, too, in these vocational stories he introduces a little labor trouble which is always fomented by the ubiquitous alien agitator, and quelled by our loyal boy-hero. In *Ritchie of the News,* he goes a step farther. Ritchie's old friend, a disgruntled old shoemaker who occasionally entertains suspicions as to the integrity of his

fellow townsmen has his shop broken into and several ribs broken, by way of punishment. "So vengeance had overtaken the gossip," reflects Ted Ritchie, and with a few similarly pious sentiments, turns his attention to other things. This episode, stripped of its sugar coating, smacks strongly of the Black Legion.

Yet Mr. Heyliger would be the first to deny—and in good faith—that it was his intention to indoctrinate his readers with such ideals. Which is precisely why these few episodes have been emphasized, possibly out of all proportion to their actual importance. They reveal another angle to the problem: can we possibly give our children a "pure" and "innocuous" literature, completely uncontaminated by the social and political views of its authors, even if it were wise to do so?

Indoctrination: What Kind?

• Everything with a point of view can be, indeed, is, propaganda or indoctrination of a sort. The point at issue then is, obviously, shall we have something to say about the type of indoctrination which our children should have, shall we guide them in their formulation of a *weltanschauung*—a world view—or shall we leave it to chance with the hope that the false notions which they imbibe with these innocuous little stories will simply not affect them?

As a matter of fact, we have been attempting for some years now, to "indoctrinate" our children for peace, by steering much of their study and reading in the direction of people of other lands. There has been much talk of preventing war by the goodwill which would inevitably result from a greater understanding of the manners and customs of the folk across the seas. It is a consoling thought, ignoring as it does, the fundamental causes of war. It is not the place of this article to discuss these, but whether the publication of *Our Little Ethiopian Cousin,* a year earlier, or ten years earlier, would have prevented the bombs which rained down on Addis Ababa, is at least questionable. It is highly possible that an honest peace literature for children would have some educative value. Such a literature would drop the present emphasis on the quaint, exotic, and picturesque, which seems to exaggerate the differences between peoples. It might concentrate a little more on the every-day working lives of the simple people of all countries, people who are essentially so much alike, who want the same things for themselves and their children, and have nothing to gain from war but tragedy. It might point out the forces in each country which have been working for war throughout history. This would take skill, no doubt, and passionate sincerity, and a real understanding of people the world over, but it could be done. As it is, countless insipid and futile tales of the windmill and wooden shoes variety flood the market, while the countries who can most influence the peace of our world are pretty well left alone. Almost nothing is available in readable form on modern Japan, or Germany and Italy under fascism. Until recently this was true of post-revolutionary Russia as well. The success of Ilin's *New Russia's Primer,* however, evidently started a small trend in children's books on the subject. True, they vary in degree of excellence and objectivity, but the *Katrinka* books, *Vanya of the Streets, Little Comrade One-Crutch, Palaces on Monday* do partially fill a real need. A few books which attempt to give an honest picture of the conflicts of culture in present-day China have come to the fore—*Young Fu,* the Newbery prize winner, *Ho-Ming,* and *The Young Revolutionist* by Pearl Buck—the latter perhaps better adapted to older boys and girls.

Shall we assume from the foregoing that any literature which attempts to introduce children to the social realities must necessarily deal with the contemporary scene? Not at all. What of the frontier tradition in American life? One cannot watch the endless streams of stories of Pioneer days and the Winning of the West without wishing that out of this deluge there may come an honest interpretation of the American pioneer that will give some attention to the economic motives which led these harassed folk to crowd their families and a few cherished possessions into covered wagons, and make the long, agonizing trek across the country. Surely some of our children must wonder, as they read, why women were willing to take their suckling (or even unborn) babies into so much peril.

Rose-hued Interpretations of History

• Most pioneer stories do make an attempt to present some of the grim realities of pioneer life, but in almost all cases they are the most obvious, external dangers of Indians and prairie fire. The cruelties inherent in the life itself—the desperate struggle to wrest a living from the land, (the heedless rape of the land as they went) the drought, the loneliness, the endless woman's work, the financial

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Parents' Questions and Discussion

STUDY GROUP DEPARTMENT

Cécile Pilpel, Director—Anna W. M. Wolf, Editor

• *This department invites your questions on the subjects to be discussed in coming issues:* The Management of Routines, Parental Attitudes, Science Contributes, *and* The Cardinal Virtues Today. *Discussion of your questions may prove helpful not only to other individual parents but also for use in study group work.*

My little boy of five is terribly distressed by any suggestion of horror or of sadness in the stories which are read to him. Whenever I come to a sad incident, he will beg me not to go on with that story, and often his eyes fill with tears. Should I skip all the unpleasant parts in his reading; or should I try to get him accustomed to them?

You might first of all examine the type of books being read to your child to make sure that they are the proper selection for his age. Perhaps his reading is too fantastic and over-stimulating for him. From the simpler and more everyday kind of story he might be able to accept unhappy incidents with greater assurance. Sometimes the same child who cannot bear anything sad at the age of five later, at the age of nine, cannot get enough of blood and thunder. Nevertheless, there are some children more sensitive than others in this respect, and I should certainly not try to impose any horror stories on such a child. There are many well-balanced and non-timorous adults who have never been able to enjoy the grotesque or horror type of story or movie and have a healthy distaste for this kind of vicarious suffering.

If, on the other hand, you feel that your child's reading is sound, but that he simply cannot accept as much realism as most children of his age can, then I should begin to search for possible causes. A situation in which a child cannot bear the mention of unhappiness or sadness suggests an emotional burden of uneasiness or anxiety which makes him unable to face any hint of insecurity.

I should not force him to listen to painful stories against his will, nor should I skip over all unpleasant passages. I should introduce them occasionally and casually—you may find him accepting one type and rejecting another. With a story which you know your child might find sad, you could outline the story to him in advance, suggesting that there might be a few "shivery" moments, but that everything comes out well in the end, and since it is such an interesting story, wouldn't he like it anyhow? Giving him the freedom to choose the story himself might make him willing to accept something he would be afraid of if it came unexpectedly from you. Maybe the reading of these stories is done too solemnly; a slight injection of humor might do much to dispel the overtone of fright. In any case, this method of letting him choose some stories and discard others, urging him to tell what kind of stories he would like and what he would not, may give some index as to the special sources of his fears.

Is it a good thing for a boy of nine to be a "book worm"? My youngster would rather sit indoors with a book of fantastic tales or cowboy adventures than be out riding his bicycle or playing ball with the other boys. I fear for both his health and his eyesight and that he won't grow up a natural boy among boys. Should I take his books away?

It is well to recognize from the start that there may be both sound and unsound elements in the tendencies you describe. One way of approaching your problem is to find some activity which will compete successfully with reading. Can you distinguish in your boy's reading any marked interests? If so, see if they can be extended into action. For example, if he loves dog books, this might lead him to want a dog, to care for it, to take walks with it, to build a house for it. Wild West books might, with your or his father's help, be made the basis for making costumes, painting, or building villages and corrals. Purely fictional subjects could lead to dramatizations which would involve other children. By no means take away his books. By sharing in his reading interests many ways should occur to you for helping him to extend them into action: remember,

however, that he will need your active participation for a while at least.

Sometimes children who are unhappy, troubled, unable to have satisfactory relationships with other children, take refuge in the world of unreality which reading may supply. If this is the case, you should be ready to admit it, strive to understand it fully, and seek to remove the causes. Often the difficulty lies in the child's position in the family, his feelings about himself in relation to brothers and sisters, father and mother. Or an only child takes this kind of refuge from loneliness. If this is the situation, the child may need to have his self-confidence built up by reassurances of affection and interest on the part of both his parents, as well as help in building friendships with other children.

It may be, however, that your boy's strong interest in reading is wholesome enough and that he is the type who will always be a "bookish" person. This is not necessarily a serious calamity. Some perfectly normal people, children and adults, never care much for sports, games, or outdoor activity or for constant companionship. It is true that to a certain extent these things are necessary for health, physical and mental, but it is important that your boy should at no time feel that his parents regard him as queer or unmanly. Be sure that in the name of a "balanced personality" you are not failing to honor his individuality or neglecting the potentialities inherent in the interests which he spontaneously shows.

Are there any research studies and what is the best current opinion concerning the effect of cheap literature on our youth? I refer to gangster stories and other tales of anti-social behavior. In spite of "moral endings" do they help to breed young gangsters? Do cheap sex stories in the pulp and movie magazines, which, while featuring the risqué, also misrepresent the real sources of happiness in marriage, play their part in creating young people who are irresponsible or promiscuous? If so, what should parents do about it—at least where their own children are concerned?

Young delinquents have sometimes stated that such tales or such movies have "put ideas into their heads," yet there is no reason to regard their own testimony on this matter as sound. There is no conclusive research on this subject, nor will you find "expert" opinions which are in agreement. The causes of anti-social and irresponsible behavior lie deep and it would be unsafe to say that literature of the kind you refer to plays a leading part. Perhaps such reading matter, if it chances to fall upon fertile soil, may act as a precipitating cause of misdeed or help to mold attitudes which for other reasons are already half formed. There are undoubtedly certain young people for whom a diet of this sort might intensify unhealthy tendencies, though even for them mere suppression of what is "bad" is not enough. One must try to reach the cause of their lack of mental health.

If our own children seem to be fundamentally sound morally and emotionally, I do not believe that we have much to fear. Though they may show the universal tendency to be fascinated by crime, murder, rape, and seduction, they are more than likely to find their way through these unsavory matters without loss of balance, if their own lives offer wholesome outlets. The important thing for the parent is to "stand by," ready with interpretations, explanation, and discussion rather than a top-loftical or horrified attitude of condemnation. Better than forbidding such literature is an active policy of discussing it realistically and not too emotionally from your adult standpoint. And in addition, see to it that there are plenty of good books and wholesome recreation available at all times.

Among my children's books are many tales of war and fighting—airplane squadrons, cavalry, soldiers. All the more romantic aspects of the military spirit seem to have crept into their library under the guise of adventure. My husband and I have always believed that we should do everything in our power to discourage the glorification of war and to help our children to understand it as it really is—both horrible and stupid. Therefore we presented our boys with Stalling's book, "The Next World War," in which all of the sordidness and brutality involved are actually photographed, stripped of glamor. However, we have almost regretted this step. One boy seems frankly unmoved and callous to its horrors and for the other, death and mutilation evidently have a morbid fascination. Both have pored over the volume, and since owning it talk more about war and take more pleasure rather than less in war games, toy firearms, and all the rest. Where have we made our mistakes?

Your boys' attitude is not necessarily the result of your errors. The impulses toward aggression, the love of danger, even of cruelty, seem to be an essential part of human nature which come to the fore periodically for reasons we do not always understand. Perhaps we might add that they are

most likely to break out among people who, lacking other sources of satisfaction, crave these more violent and primitive expressions.

Fundamentally, I doubt that your boys' "war spirit" of today will predispose them either more or less to rush to arms in "the next world war," though the fact that their parents' attitude is unqualifiedly opposed to war may have an influence upon them. I should not forbid their games or reading but I should refuse to participate or further these enterprises in any way and I should give my reasons for this position as clearly as possible.

What you can hope for your boys and perhaps for all the members of our troubled and troublesome human race is that they may have ample opportunities of all kinds for outlets for their constructive energies. See to it that they have experience in creative activities of all kinds and as time passes, in personal relationships which are emotionally nourishing. Help your children wherever you can to appreciate the romance in scientific and spiritual adventure, and to see the heroism in the lives of fighters against the forces of disease, disorder, and ignorance. As they grow older make them aware of criticisms of war—of its economic, political, and psychological origins and that it is likely to be a failure both as a solution to national problems and as a source of pleasurable excitement. Our greatest hope lies in the fact that in addition to being war-like, human nature yearns also to create, to preserve, and to cherish what it loves. These impulses are real, too, and can flourish if the soil is favorable for growth. It is the emotionally frustrated, the bored, the insecure, and the childlike, who yearn for the bugle call—not those who have found their satisfactions in the constructive ways of peace.

When I was a child reading was one of my great joys. By the age of ten I had read all of Alcott, some of Dickens and Scott, and other good authors. My daughter, aged ten, in the fifth grade, when left to her own devices for entertainment turns to the radio and gets her pleasure in listening. She has read very few books and seems to have little interest in reading. How can the modern parent or teacher develop in the child a keen interest in books when a variety of entertainment is always on tap and requires only the turning of a button?

Ever since printing was developed to the point where books were made available for the majority, only a small proportion of children (or adults for that matter) have turned to books for entertainment. It may be that your child is among those who find their pleasure largely in other ways.

We must recognize the fact that children differ in this respect as in every other. Some children, even those exposed to the charms of the radio, read from fifty to seventy-five books a year, and others read none at all. The child who has difficulty with read-

(*Continued on page 95*)

Suggestions for Study: Children's Reading

TOPICAL OUTLINE

1. READING AND LIVING
   Reading as a tool; as a means of enlarging our experience; for entertainment; for personality development; as a strengthener of home ties; sharing what we read.

2. DEVELOPING TASTE IN READING
   Reading should be related to child's interests and degree of maturity.
   Importance of exposure to a variety of good books. Use of libraries and other resources. Importance of children's discussing what they read.
   Reading aloud; practice for children in expression; as pleasure for whole family.
   Do our schools develop in children a genuine love of reading?
   Have "sets" of "children's classics" a valid place in the child's library?
   Encyclopædias for children.

3. THE ADOLESCENT AND READING
   Gangster tales, sexy stories, and other fiction of low standards; shall parents act as censors? How else may young people be safeguarded? The adolescent and adult literature—shall we permit unlimited "browsing"?

4. SPECIAL PROBLEMS
   The child who will not read; the bookworm; reading as an "escape from reality"; "trashy" fiction, the funnies; vulgarity and slang in literature. The cruel and the unethical in literature; fairy tales—values and limitations; "special interest" books; selected reading lists for children.

FOR FURTHER READING

ADVENTURES IN READING.....1936
by May Lamberton Becker. *Stokes.*
LITERATURE OLD AND NEW FOR CHILDREN.....1934
by Annie E. Moore. *Houghton Mifflin.*
LITERATURE AND THE CHILD.....1934
by Blanche E. Weekes. *Silver Burdett.*
A GUIDE TO LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN.....1928
by Walter Taylor Field. *Ginn & Co.*
YOUR CHILD TODAY AND TOMORROW.....1934
Chapter VII. Books and Reading.
by Sidonie M. Gruenberg. *Blue Ribbon Books.*
THE NEW GENERATION.....1930
Part V. The Decline of Mother Goose.
Ed. by Calverton and Schmalhausen. *The Macaulay Co.*
CHILD STUDY MAGAZINE, November, 1931. Children's Reading.

Readers' Slants

• In an endeavor to throw some light on the question of how far children's characters are affected by their early reading, how their ideals and ideas are shaped by books, a questionnaire was sent to a number of young people just past their teens, asking them to recall their most vivid early reading experiences and evaluate them in short perspective. While it is too early to draw conclusions from the replies received so far, some of the responses are illuminating. We therefore present them here, in part, and anonymously, in the hope that they may serve to affirm or modify some of the discussion in this "Children's Reading" issue. A full report of this survey will appear in a later issue.

From a Girl of Twenty:

Looking back on my childhood, I have a strong feeling of gratitude toward my family for placing in my hands some of the finest books I believe any child can read.

Every Christmas, starting when I was four years old, I received *John Martin's Big Book* for that particular year. These books contained all sorts of things—Bible stories, everyday stories, fairy tales, jingles, nature stories, puzzles and riddles, narrative poems, ancient myths, etc. The books were profusely illustrated in black and white and red or green, the pictures being interwoven about large pleasant print in a most attractive way. Nice illustrations always impressed me—I loved to paint and used many of the pictures in my old story book as models.

There was another group of books which left almost as great an impression on me. These were my books of rhymes and verses. First there was *Mother Goose,* of course, and later *Peter Patter* and *Aesop's Fables.* These books were all characterized by the shining white paper and beautifully colored illustrations. The charm of the *Peter Patter* rhymes will always live with me. There were also Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses* and *The Golden Age of Childhood* (by Katherine Forrest Hamill) and *Poems Every Child Should Know* (a collection by Mary E. Burt). To this last book I am especially indebted for my early acquaintance with, and my love of, good poetry.

From nine years of age to twelve was a period during which I read mostly just to read. I devoured fairy tales—I loved to fight with the hero and suffer with the heroine. I read all of Lang's books—the Red, Blue, Green, Yellow, etc., Fairy Books and any other collections I could lay my hand on. Hans Christian Andersen's stories seemed too morbid—I could not appreciate them then. I loved Louisa May Alcott's books—I read practically all of them. And then because fairy tales in any form delighted me, I reveled in the stories of *Oz* by Frank Baum. *The Wonderful Adventure of Nils* impressed me very much. My first taste of Scott came with *Ivanhoe* and after that I read many of the other novels. I wish I had read more of Dickens' works. Then there was *Alice in Wonderland,* Barrie's stories of *Peter Pan,* Mark Twain's wonderful tales, and, of course, *Black Beauty.*

Later I began to read just anything that came my way (that was when I was about twelve or thirteen). I am afraid that there was much of it that was, if not exactly harmful, at least not very elevating. I know I read practically unceasingly, yet I can point to very few books by name. I enjoyed historical novels immensely—one of my favorites was *Janice Meredith.*

Then suddenly, this flood of reading stopped. School work had made it impossible for me to read as continuously as I had when twelve years old. I read only during the summer, and when I was fifteen I found my taste had changed. I didn't care for detective stories any more; I wanted to read modern novels—and not just any one, but the best. I found out what were the best-sellers and read all of them I could. These books showed me the world in an entirely new light. It wasn't full of fairies and magic, but it was a very realistic place where people faced problems and fought for existence. The books of childhood were essentially for amusement. Grown-up books entertained you, but they almost always acquainted you with some side of life, presented a problem—made you *think.*

I cannot say that any particular book I read gave me a definite point of view. Each one of the many good books I have read has usually thrown some light on a special subject or group of subjects—has

left me with new ideas which I have worked into my own personal philosophy of life.

From a Boy Just Entering College:

I'll just discuss one book because I believe that will make my comments more understandable than if I discussed many.

Jimmy Makes the Varsity I read as a small child. I was so impressed by it that until I left for school I read it at least once a year. One part in it I shall never forget: Jimmy is playing in the line against a heavier and more expert player. The ball is snapped, Jimmy charges only to be pushed to the ground by his opponent. Again, three times and a fourth time this happens, but Jimmy does not give. He keeps driving, driving, lifting his knees high and charging into the immovable body which is his adversary. Never till he is driven to the ground does Jimmy stop charging.

I shall never forget the picture—mental—of this boy faced by unsurmountable odds, coming up smiling each time from defeat. I have tried to form my psychology of life in this mould.

From a Recent College Graduate (Girl):

I cannot recall any book that made a real impression on me while I was a very small child. As I grew older, from eight to ten, I read some serial books, *The Bobbsey Twins* and *Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue*. I liked them because the children in them seemed to be so happy and unharassed by parents' demands. They weren't made to wear clothes they didn't like and their lives were full and exciting. The first books that I remember with any definiteness are the *Marjorie* books by Carolyn Wells. I read these when I was eleven and remember clearly the harmonious family life without squabbling or partiality of the Mayfairs. I remember once when I thought my mother was favoring my older sister on one occasion, I cried and told my sister in private that it didn't happen that way in the Mayfair family. My sister's answer probably was an important step in my education. She said, "But that's in a book; it's not a real family." That was something I had never thought of before. The real world was not always like the book world—smooth, harmonious, unharassed, and exciting.

In the next three or four years I read the books that meant the most to me, books that I shall never forget—*What Katy Did, Anne of Green Gables,* and all the other *Anne* books by Lucy M. Montgomery. I liked them so well because I identified myself with them. I was the girl too tall for her age; I was the unbeautiful child. I wept the most delicious tears over their sorrows. In the end Katy and Anne emerged as heroines in spite of their physical and other difficulties. I imagined myself such a heroine and thought it important that everyone I knew should like me and consider me good. I took this role very seriously and worried about it. It was this sort of thinking that kept me from seeing things realistically. I saw things through a haze of glory in which I had the too responsible position of keeping everybody happy. It took years and the beginnings of a nervous breakdown to bring me down to earth.

To sum up my scattered thoughts, my reading was almost wholly of the sort to stimulate illusory thinking. At college, at the age of 16, I first began to be aware of the difference between my illusions and reality and this was not brought about through books but through actual experience.

From a College Junior (Girl):

When I was a small child *Raggedy Ann* interested me no end, and I have read it over off and on ever since. Often after reading about "Raggedy" I would be a model girl-child, like "Raggedy's" mistress, for a number of days, and play earnestly with my two dolls. But soon I would put them aside for the more constructive game of "farmyard," which I could play with my brother and which was therefore infinitely more interesting.

As for my more adult reading, I have read some of the "books that everyone should read," but in my early adolescence, I (sadly) turned from the beaten track and read much of *The Campfire Girls* saga, *The Little Maid* series, and love stories. To save me from my ruin, mother bought me *Daddy Long Legs* when I demanded love stories. I was disappointed and laid it aside for a newspaper serial. However, my tastes in due course changed, and I read *Daddy Long Legs* a few years later with enjoyment. I think I am now "caught up" on books everyone should read, because of courses in school and college, and an interest. I have read *Ivanhoe,* and *Henry Esmond,* and, of course, *Gone With the Wind*. My most recent accomplishment is the completion of *The Golden Ass of Apuleius* (which I never should have thought of reading had it not been for college requirement. I'm glad I was forced into it).

I have often been reassured about my own per-

sonally-arrived-at conclusions on life by chance phrases in books or in poems. I think that, partially from reading, I have gained a substantial moral view, and I think my philosophy—such as it is (it is subject to change)—comes even to a greater extent from books. It is not, of course, traceable to all books or even three or four. But if traceable it be, I think that *Vanity Fair, Hamlet, Anna Karenina,* and *Les Miserables* have so far had their effects.

As to harmful effects: egotistically I am not conscious of any gained from books, but if there are good effects from books there must be bad ones, too. Perhaps you could call a tendency to wish life were more like books (however cliché this may sound) a harmful effect. If so, the majority of people are harmed.

• *To what extent the deliberate "story with a moral" may have influenced any of these young people does not specifically appear in their replies. To throw some light on this vexed question it may be permissible to draw upon the views of a more mature reader, wise in the lore both of literature and of young people. The following is quoted from Dorothy Canfield Fisher's introduction to a collection of "stories with a purpose."* *

"In the traditional outcry against the story-with-a-purpose, so scorned by literary critics, hasn't there been an overlooking of something rather important—of the fact that many of the oldest and certainly some of the very best stories have been quite baldly of this kind? Æsop and his myriad followers in all languages, what did they do but pick out the best from the thousands which had come down from the past, and set them into writing, purpose and all, yes, even moral purpose and all? And how steadily they go on living, these old folk-products, whose purpose is not to show the narrative, descriptive, poetic, or any other skill of the author, but to put into concrete story-form some abstract truths discovered by experience about human life and how best to live it. Literary schools rise and fall, and others surge into fashion and ebb away to oblivion; great languages dry out, gather dust through the centuries till they are put up attic with other junk from the past, and their places in the world are taken by rough, working-people's ungrammatical dialects somehow grown into rich and proud maturity—let what convulsion will take place in the literary world, what transformation in the linguistic world, our race always heaves up fables on its back and carries them along into the new existence. We can't keep house without them, we can't bring up children without them, and we know it. Whatever else we leave behind as we plod or plunge forward, it is never the story with a moral purpose. We must have plenty of them on our shelves, or our children suffer—the reason being of course that they are vicarious experience, teach children what they could not learn from life without broken bones, often broken necks, sometimes broken hearts.

"Of course the story with a purpose does not survive only in these humble, lichen-like, anonymous folk-growths. Even in its simplest form of fable men of genius have given their best to it—La Fontaine, Hans Christian Andersen, Tolstoi. As far as that goes let us drop this pretense that there is anything at all special about the story with a purpose and admit that very nearly everybody who ever wrote a story of any kind put into it an idea he wanted to express. So simple and flowery a tale of young love as "Aucassin and Nicolette"—is it not a protest against the sacrifices demanded of young human beings by rigid, meaningless conventions of caste and religion? The "Song of Roland," what does it say to the generation after generation who never allow it to be forgotten, save that courage is something to be proud of even when it is crushed down by material defeat? And "Hedda Gabler"—did any fable end its simple tale with a jingling couplet—"Our moral here, is thus to show"—more naïvely than Ibsen shows his brilliant, egocentric heroine who has tried so hard to get and never give, tragically dead after dreadful misery, while her boring well-intentioned husband and the tiresomely virtuous other woman look forward with glowing hearts to the happiness of working hard to repair damage done to work which is none of theirs.

"Why then, . . . do up-to-date, sophisticated, or even intelligent parents hang back so from using moral stories as part of their children's education? For a very simple reason—because most moralizing stories are bad stories. And they are bad because they are written by professional moralists, people who, with the best intentions in the world, put lies into their stories; that is, who have their eyes so fixed on the moral they are trying to inculcate, that they won't take time and energy to walk around and in and out the long, winding but clear road of truth,

(*Continued on page 96*)

* The Children's Story Caravan by Anna Pettit Broomell. J. B. Lippincott Company, 1935. (Reprinted here with permission of the publishers.)

Science Contributes

WHOOPING COUGH IMMUNIZATION

By JEROME L. KOHN, M.D.

PERTUSSIS, also known as whooping cough, is one of the most serious contagious diseases of childhood. It is particularly serious in children under two years of age. For many years the mortality from whooping cough, as recorded in contagious disease hospitals, has been higher than that from measles, scarlet fever, or diphtheria. The most frequent and most serious complication is a special type of pneumonia which is widespread and in some cases causes permanent damage to the lungs.

Whooping cough also differs from most of the contagious diseases, in that there is no period of immunity after birth. A child only a few days old may become infected on exposure. In contrast one rarely sees a child infected with measles before the age of six months or with scarlet fever before one year.

It is often difficult to make a diagnosis of whooping cough early in the disease, as it is first thought to be "a cold." The onset is gradual: the cough gets a little worse, especially during the night. It is usually two weeks or more before the typical paroxysm developes. At the present time there is no practical method of making an assured early diagnosis, such as the throat culture in diphtheria.

In this brief review I shall confine myself to the prophylactic treatment of whooping cough.

In 1906, Bordet and Gengou announced that they had discovered the cause of whooping cough to be a small bacteria found in the sputum of patients with this disease. They called this organism "bacillus pertussis." There is some doubt at present, that this organism is the sole cause of whooping cough. Since its discovery, many attempts have been made to use the pertussis bacillus in the form of a vaccine as a preventive. This method is comparable to the use of typhoid vaccine in the prevention of typhoid fever.

In 1928, Dr. L. W. Sauer began to use a vaccine prepared differently from any heretofore described, and he also gave more concentrated and larger doses. He used the vaccine in his private practice and in the clinics in which he worked. He gave this treatment a five-year trial before announcing his results. His most convincing evidence, of the efficacy of the vaccine, was that in twenty-seven cases an injected child was intermittently exposed to a sister or brother who had whooping cough. These injected children were exposed daily through the catarrhal and paroxysmal stages but only one contracted whooping cough. Sauer states that it takes from three to four months to develop complete immunity. How long the immunity will endure is not known. It seems, however, to last for a long time.

The vaccine can be administered to children over six months old. The injection cannot do any harm. The vaccine is made of dead pertussis bacilli. In no conceivable way can the inoculation give the child whooping cough nor is there any indication that the child is more susceptible to whooping cough soon after the inoculation. The vaccine is given in three doses, at weekly intervals. After an injection there may be a transient rise in temperature, temporary redness, or tenderness at the site of injection and occasionally a small nodule may be present for a week.

Because of the frequency of whooping cough and its importance as a cause of mortality among younger children, it is very important that any promising prophylactic measures be thoroughly investigated. Many thousands of children have now been injected. What have been the results? Is it desirable to continue its use? Before attempting to answer these questions, we must consider several facts about whooping cough.

1. Whooping cough has no reliable test of immunization such as the Schick test in diphtheria. An actual exposure to a case of whooping cough remains the ultimate test of immunity.

2. One must differentiate also between a casual exposure and an intimate exposure. A casual (transient, accidental) exposure is one in which a child is in contact, for a short time, with a child who has whooping cough; for instance, playing in the park with an infected child. An intimate exposure is one in which a member of the family or some other person is frequently coughing near the child.

The reports show that a certain number of injected

children contract whooping cough when exposed to it. When compared with children who did not receive the vaccine, the incidence of infection in the injected group is much less. It is also apparent that the cases of whooping cough in the injected children seem less severe. It also seems that on casual exposure the injected child is much less likely to contract the infection. Dr. Sauer reports from his own work, and from that of others, that there have been from 10 per cent to 15 per cent failures in intimate contacts (familial exposures) as contrasted with from 40 per cent to 75 per cent infection in the uninjected children. In Evanston, Illinois, a city of 65,000, 90 per cent of the children of the poorer classes have had the vaccine. In 1936 only eighty cases of whooping cough were reported, none in the poorer group. Up to this time the average number of cases reported had exceeded 400 a year.

Most physicians feel that the vaccine has some immunization value. There are a few reports, however, where the incidence of whooping cough in the injected children was no less than that in the uninjected group. A very intensive and critical study has been made in Cleveland, Ohio. These investigators found that the incidence of infection was about the same in the injected and uninjected groups. They feel, however, that the course of illness was milder in the injected group.

Drs. Krueger and Frawley have described an entirely new type of whooping cough vaccine, but this seems more important in treatment than in prevention. I shall, therefore, not discuss its use.

Recent modifications in the preparation, concentration and dosage of Dr. Sauer's vaccine seem to have improved its effectiveness (Mishulow, Kendrick, and Eldering, Denmark). It would seem, therefore, that the further use of the vaccine for the prevention of whooping cough on a wide scale is justified.

News and Notes

Child Study Theatre Benefit

Our metropolitan readers will be interested to know that the Child Study Association is giving a theater benefit on December 17, 1936, and has been fortunate enough to secure the new play of George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart, "You Can't Take It With You." Members and their friends are cordially invited to attend and by so doing to help finance the work of the Association. Tickets may be obtained by writing to headquarters at 221 West 57th Street.

Education By Radio

To stimulate continuation and expansion of civic education through public forum centers, $443,000 has been allocated to the United States Office of Education for the development of civic education for adults, and education by radio. These funds will be transmitted to superintendents of schools who are organizing forum centers for demonstrating new methods of practical adult education for citizenship. Mrs. Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg, director of the Child Study Association, is serving on the advisory committee.

The new funds will make possible the addition of ten public forum centers and will permit the continuance of the Educational Radio Project through June, 1937. In eight months this project has made great progress in demonstrating how public agencies can successfully use radio in the service of education. Five programs now on the air are: National Broadcasting Company: "The World Is Yours"; "Have You Heard"; "Answer Me This"; "Education in the News." Columbia Broadcasting System: "Safety Musketeers."

The United States Commissioner of Education, J. W. Studebaker says, "Civic education through public forums promises to be one of the most effective social inventions for the improvement of self-government." . . .

"Since the inception of mass communication by radio, our people have been hoping that radio could be used in the service of education. Some promising efforts have been made, but broadcasters and educators alike agree that much remains to be done. . . . With funds for continuation of the radio project, the Office of Education is not only discovering successful methods by which education can take the airways but it is also discovering methods of

organizing and financing educational broadcasting which agencies of education can follow.

"There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that radio will become one of the most powerful constructive forces for the education of our people if we devote adequate attention to the development of truly educational programs."

For Foreign-Born Parents

Perhaps no group of parents faces more perplexing problems than our foreign-born fathers and mothers of American children. Recognizing their very real need for sympathetic guidance and support, the Foreign Language Information Service is inaugurating a series of weekly parent education articles addressed to the many who read our foreign language papers. Mrs. Jean Schick Grossman of the Child Study Association staff, who has had many years of successful experience in working with parents of this type, has been asked to assist in the preparation of this material. The articles will be translated into nineteen different languages, and will reach, it is estimated, the bulk of our 14,000,000 foreign born.

The Foreign Language Information Service is an educational agency dedicated to the task of assisting the foreign born in their adjustment to American life while preserving the cultural contribution which they bring to this new land. This new project is one among many of their activities designed to this end.

Better Children's Programs

As a result of many successful Saturday entertainment programs for children conducted in the school auditoriums of a number of states for the past three years, a national organization has been formed to obtain better children's programs throughout the country. It is a noncommercial project known as Junior Programs, Inc., with offices at 221 West 57th Street, New York City. Dorothy L. McFadden, who is the executive director, was formerly in charge of programs for children for the National Music League, Inc.

Junior Programs believes that every child in America should have in his own school or community auditorium the cultural opportunities that were formerly available only to the favored children of well-to-do parents in a few big cities. It is the only non-commercial organization assisting parents and educators to bring to children the finest professional adult artists in ballets, operas, plays, concerts, marionettes, travel talks, and other entertainments, at admission prices as low as ten and twenty cents.

The field representatives in each state give free assistance to the local women's clubs, Parent-Teacher Associations, Junior Leagues, schools, or other organizations in working out practical budgets, selecting the best and most suitable programs, and obtaining newspaper publicity and other promotion material. The field secretaries also speak in the local schools and parent's meetings in advance of the performances in order to interest the children and parents in the programs that are coming.

In the last three years the entertainments sponsored by this organization have been attended by enthusiastic audiences of about 330,000 young people of grade and high school age.

Mrs. McFadden will be delighted to assist either in person or by letter anyone who is interested in sponsoring worth-while entertainment for young people.

Preventive Care for Children

New York City's program of care for children with behavior disorders and personality problems is short-sighted in avoiding preventive care because of expense, and the result is a much heavier cost in terms of delinquency, criminality, and adult mental illness, according to the New York City Committee on Mental Hygiene of the State Charities Aid Association. The Committee, of which Dr. George S. Stevenson is chairman, forms the Section on Mental Hygiene of the Welfare Council of New York City. Not only are the present facilities for the study and treatment of children inadequate, it points out, but they are unevenly distributed, being concentrated in Manhattan.

"The community should be as actively concerned with the prevention of mental disease as it is with the limitation of physical disorders," the committee insists. . . . "Delinquents and criminals are no more developed spontaneously than is typhoid fever or dementia præcox. When delinquent or criminal behavior appears it is the final expression of causes that have been working for some period of time." . . .

"Society should be as much concerned with children presenting acute disorders of behavior, represented by anti-social symptoms, as it is in the more definitely physical manifestations of diseases that may be attributed to germ infection or toxic disorders."

SHOP TALK

NOW that we no longer think of toys merely as something to keep the child out of mischief, but as real aids to his growth and development, most parents are much more conscious of the importance of choosing good toys. Yet when it comes to buying toys for their own children or as presents for others, many intelligent parents feel baffled and uncertain as to the wisdom of their choices.

The general criterion for a good toy, however, is a rather simple one: that it stimulates a child to do something actively with it, and that it has possibilities of being used in many different ways over a long period of time. Blocks, for example, are only simple pieces of wood, yet they are capable of creating a hundred different objects for the same child, while some very complicated mechanical gadget can do one thing and only that one thing. It may be remarked here that men, in particular, are fond of bringing home the type of toy that you wind up and watch it do three somersaults; they never understand why after ten minutes the youngster gets tired of watching these cute three somersaults and usually breaks into activity by breaking up the toy.

Many people are repelled by the name "educational" toys because of the notion that these must be toys which teach things in a somewhat schoolroom fashion instead of things which are fun to play with. One has only to realize that all of the child's foundation toys—balls, blocks, dolls, skates, bicycles, art materials, tools for cutting and hammering, etc.—are "educational" toys because they contribute to a physical and mental education he gets in no other way. The toy to beware of is one which, on account of its complexity or rigidity of use, does not respond readily to the child's manipulation and frustrates him because, as one little boy very wisely complained, "it won't play with me." The manufacturers have responded to this demand for toys that play *with* children, and they are now to be found in abundance in all the larger stores.

One of the most satisfactory things about Educational Playthings, Inc., at 20 East 69th Street, New York, is not only the wealth of good play material present but the absence of all the usual junk which clutters up most toy stores. It is run very intelligently, and it is easy to pick out quickly good toys for each age level. Among the hundreds of potential Christmas gifts we noted especially the following:

A complete range of children's simple musical instruments, including whistles, flutes, cymbals, bells, chimes, triangles, tambourines, clappers, xylophones, and a particularly attractive collection of real Indian tom-toms made of bark and skin, and gaily painted. The drums are priced from $1.00 to $4.00 according to size and tone.

A tin of wet modeling clay which is one of the few clays really soft enough for small fingers to work easily. The plasticity can be retained indefinitely by covering with a damp cloth. ($.75 for five pounds.)

Large and sturdy art easels, the kind used in nursery schools and kindergartens, with glass jelly jars set in slots for mixing the paints (washable). Special blackboards to fit over the easels. ($6.50 to $10 depending on height of easel, 40", 45", and 50", and whether single or double, for two children to work at.)

"Artista Frescol"—a new art medium for painting with dry color with a felt brush. No water and no mess. Brush is cleaned with sandpaper. For children over six. ($1.00 and $3.00.)

Krazy-Ikes—a terrible name for a fascinating toy which consists of little pegs and heads which fit into each other to form an endless variety of objects and fantastic animals. ($1.00.)

A large collection of hard-to-find wooden puzzles which the young child can handle with much more satisfaction than cardboard ones. Graded from 2½ to 5 years. ($1.00.)

Marionette Kit for boys and girls over ten which contains all the materials, including five heads to be painted, and step by step easy instructions for making five complete marionette figures ten inches tall. ($5.00.)

"Young Folks Art Gallery"—For older children. A selection of 100 color miniatures of famous pictures with a well-bound scrap book and a booklet giving information about the artists and the paintings. ($2.50)

These things and hundreds of others which can be ordered by mail are described and illustrated in the "Handbook of Educational Work-and-Play Material" published by Educational Playthings. ($.35.)

The children's book lists in this issue undoubtedly suggest Christmas presents, and shopping for them can be simplified by ordering all books through the Child Study Association. P. R. F.

Books of the Year for Children

MRS. HUGH GRANT STRAUS, Chairman, Children's Book Committee

THIS list has been selected and arranged by the Children's Book Committee of the Child Study Association, to meet a broad range of reading interest and a variety of individual tastes. The age grouping is not intended to restrict choice, and parents are urged to study the whole list since many books have a far wider appeal than could be indicated.

For the Youngest

Ages Three, Four, and Five

The Merry Mouse (58 pages).....$.75
by Helen and Alf Evers — Farrar & Rinehart
The hickory-dickory-dock mouse and six of his friends in a humorous tale with jolly pictures.

Sambo and the Twins (90 pages).....$1.00
by Helen Bannerman — Frederick A. Stokes Co.
Our old friend Sambo returns in a new picture story wherein he rescues his twin brothers from the clutches of a monkey.

Elephant Twins (38 pages).....$1.00
by Inez Hogan — E. P. Dutton & Co.
Another amusing "Twin" story, this time of elephants—how they get into trouble and out again. Humorous illustrations by the author.

Tammie and That Puppy (32 pages).....$1.00
by Dorothy and Marguerite Bryan — Dodd, Mead & Co.
Further adventures of a lovable Scottie. He decides to leave home, but changes his mind after sampling other places. Pictures by the authors.

Peggy and the Pony (40 pages).....$1.25
by Helen Sewell — Oxford University Press
The author's charming pictures illustrate a little girl's visit to France and England with a pony-ride as the high spot of the trip.

Miss Carlotta (48 pages).....$1.25
by Lionel Reid — Oxford University Press
Having tea with the King proves to be a "big event" after all in a nonsense-book, with pictures to match by R. Denison.

***Over in the Meadow (20 pages)**.....$2.00
illus. by John Anthony Hartell — Harper & Brothers
Exquisite drawings of creatures and their young, illustrating an old nursery song.

Ages Five, Six, and Seven

***Little Tim and the Brave Sea Captain (32 pages)**...$2.00
by Edward Ardizzone — Oxford University Press
The exciting adventures of a young stowaway, in attractive picture-book form.

Pablo's Pipe (48 pages).....$1.50
by Frances Eliot — E. P. Dutton & Co.
To market, to market in Mexico with Nita and Pablo. Pablo plays on his pipes, earns money and buys surprises for his family. Gay and authentic illustrations by the author.

***The Land of Little Rain (122 pages)**.....$2.00
by Muriel H. Fellows — The John C. Winston Co.
A story of the Hopi Indians which captures the spirit of these people and their life in the land of little rain. Exquisite illustrations by the author.

Nicodemus and His Gran'pappy (48 pages).....$1.00
by Inez Hogan — E. P. Dutton & Co.
Our old friend Nicodemus has more homely adventures with his gran'pappy and his houn' dog.

Wise Old Aard-Vark (64 pages).....$1.00
by Dorothy Kunhardt — The Viking Press
Another riotous nonsense tale by the author of "Junket Is Nice."

Casey Joins the Circus (32 pages).....$.50
by Dorathea F. Dobias — Grosset & Dunlap
An exciting story of a little homeless dog's adventures in trying to join the circus: with gay pictures by the author. Real quality in an inexpensive book.

Mittens (30 pages).....$1.50
by Clare Turlay Newberry — Harper & Brothers
The author's enchanting pictures of a kitten illustrate a slender tale of a pet which is lost and found again.

***Bouncing Betsy (40 pages)**.....$1.50
by Dorothy P. Lathrop — The Macmillan Co.
The mild adventures of a baby lamb, simply told and exquisitely illustrated by the author.

Ted and Nina Have a Happy Rainy Day (32 pages)..$.50
by Marguerite de Angeli — Doubleday, Doran & Co.
Dressing up in the attic is the high point of a happily spent rainy day. Charming pictures by the author.

Mitty on Mr. Syrup's Farm (32 pages).....$1.00
by Ruth and Richard Holberg — Doubleday, Doran & Co.
Lovely pictures and a graceful story of a little girl's visit to a Western farm.

What to Do About Molly (32 pages).....$1.00
by Marjorie Flack — Houghton Mifflin Co.
A pleasant picture book about two children who spend a long morning fishing, with surprising results.

***A. B. C. of Babar (62 pages)**.....$1.50
by Jean de Brunhoff — Random House
The usual delightful Babar pictures illustrating each letter of the alphabet, in a new game of word-finding, this time in a small book.

For the Elementary Years

Ages Seven, Eight, and Nine

***Henner's Lydia (70 pages)**.....$2.00
by Marguerite de Angeli — Doubleday, Doran & Co.
The quaint and homely atmosphere of a Pennsylvania Dutch settlement pervades this delightful little-girl story and its author's equally delightful illustrations.

The Saucy Betsy (122 pages).....$2.00
by Ethel Calvert Phillips — Houghton Mifflin Co.
The spirit of the Maine Coast in a story of a New York child who visits her New England relatives on a lighthouse island.

The books starred are of outstanding interest and quality.

Little Girl With Seven Names (64 pages).....$1.50
by Mabel Leigh Hunt Frederick A. Stokes Co.
A kindly and humorous story of a little Quaker girl with seven names and how she gave two of them away. Charming black and white illustrations by Grace Paull.

Teeny and the Tall Man (156 pages).....$2.00
by Julian R. Meade Doubleday, Doran & Co.
A delightful friendship between a very tall man and a very small girl, depicted in an amusing tale.

***Little Jeemes Henry (46 pages)**.....$1.50
by Ellis Credle Thomas Nelson & Sons
A beautifully illustrated story of a small Negro boy who finally succeeded in getting to the circus. Should be read aloud because of the dialect.

Here's Juggins (162 pages).....$2.00
by Amy Wentworth Stone Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co.
A mystery story for younger boys and girls in which the heroine is the daughter of a Maine lobsterman.

Mr. Tootleoo and Co. (44 pages).....$1.75
by Bernard and Elinor Darwin Harper & Brothers
Delightful nonsense jingle about a British tar and his companions, a turtle, a tiger, and an elephant.

***The Story of Ferdinand (68 pages)**.....$1.00
by Munro Leaf The Viking Press
The humorous story of a Spanish bull who didn't want to fight. Illustrated by Robert Lawson.

No-Sitch: The Hound (80 pages).....$2.00
by Phil Stong Dodd, Mead & Co.
A strange-looking dog, his boy owner and their friends have many adventures fishing, swimming, and stalking a ghost. Illustrated by Kurt Wiese.

The Clever Cat (114 pages).....$1.50
by Eleanor Frances Lattimore Harcourt, Brace & Co.
A lively, realistic story of a cat, Ulysses, whose adventures will appeal to pet-lovers.

Little Dog Mack (138 pages).....$1.50
by Eleanor Youmans Bobbs-Merrill Co.
In this appealing story a wire-haired terrier wins his way back to the beloved young masters from whom he has been separated.

***Billy Butter (92 pages)**.....$2.00
by Berta and Elmer Hader The Macmillan Co.
Adventures of a lively little goat and the San Francisco children who found him. Irresistible pictures by the authors add to the story.

***Buddy, the Bear (32 pages)**.....$1.50
by Kurt Wiese Coward-McCann
The adventures of a baby koala bear and his bird and animal neighbors, described by a well-loved author-artist.

War Paint, an Indian Pony (92 pages).....$2.00
by Paul Brown Charles Scribner's Sons
The adventures of a wild pony who is caught and tamed by the Indians.

Bobra of Bali (44 pages).....$1.00
by Mariel Wilhoite and Elizabeth Horton
Rand McNally & Co.
A happy day in the life of a small boy and girl in Bali, illustrations in keeping with the text.

***Blue Nets and Red Sails (40 pages)**.....$1.00
by Helen Bradley Preston Longmans, Green & Co.
Two boys spend a day with the sardine fisherman and discover the lure of the sea. The charm of the Brittany Coast pervades the text and excellent water color illustrations by Margaret Temple Braley.

Beppo (80 pages).....$2.00
by Emma Brock Albert Whitman & Co.
The customs and traditions of Assisi serve as a background for this charming story and the author's primitive illustrations.

The Golden Basket (96 pages).....$2.00
by Ludwig Bemelmans The Viking Press
A subtly humorous tale of two English children in a Belgian inn. Amusing, child-like illustrations by the author.

***When the Storm God Rides (244 pages)**.....$.88
retold by Florence Stratton; collected by Bessie M. Reid
Charles Scribner's Sons
A rich collection of Texan Indian legends, well illustrated by Berniece Burrough. Simple words and large print for the very young reader.

***Indians Today (184 pages)**.....$2.00
by Mario and Mabel Scacheri Harcourt, Brace & Co.
Many unusual photographs and an informational story offer a welcome addition to our knowledge of present-day Pueblo Indians.

***Indians of the Pueblos (224 pages)**.....$1.50
by Therese O. Deming Albert Whitman & Co.
A vivid story of pueblo life, authentic in its Indian lore and atmosphere. Unusual illustrations and excellent print for the young reader.

Jerry and the Pony Express (56 pages).....$1.00
by Sanford Tousey Doubleday, Doran & Co.
Pioneer days in the West pictured in a dramatic yet simple story for the younger boy.

The Oak Tree House (129 pages).....$1.50
by Katharine Gibson Longmans, Green & Co.
In the days of Edward VI, a Goodman and his dame abandon their home because of poverty and build themselves a tree house. A lively story told in simple language and delightfully illustrated by Vera Bock.

***George Washington (56 pages)**.....$2.00
by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire
Doubleday, Doran & Co.
A picture-story book of the life of George Washington from his birth to his Presidency.

***Joseph Haydn, the Merry Little Peasant (118 pages)**.....$2.00
by Opal Wheeler and Sybil Deucher E. P. Dutton & Co.
A "young" biography of the great musician Haydn for any child, with excerpts of his better known music for those who can play.

***Tales from Grimm (238 pages)**.....$1.50
translated by Wanda Ga'g Coward-McCann
A rare and delightful rendering of Grimm's tales, beautifully illustrated by the translator.

Picture Tales from Spain (132 pages).....$1.25
by Ruth Sawyer Frederick A. Stokes Co.
A little book of Spanish folk tales, well-told and attractively illustrated.

For the Intermediate Years

Ages Nine, Ten, Eleven, and Twelve

***Teeny Gay (206 pages)**.....$2.00
by Charlie May Simon E. P. Dutton & Co.
Houseboat life on a river in Arkansas. A story of rare charm and fine feeling, with a little girl heroine.

Peggy and Paul and Laddy (208 pages).....$1.75
by Mary Jane Case Thomas Y. Crowell Co.
Jolly and exciting adventures on river and shore shared by a boy, a girl, and a dog.

Judy and Chris (210 pages).....$2.00
by Christine Noble Govan Houghton Mifflin Co.
"Those Plummer Children" have further lively adventures with their friends, colored and white, in a small Southern town.

Ship's Parrot (180 pages).....$2.00
by Honoré Morrow and William J. Swartman
William Morrow & Co.
A well-written adventure story in which David, a cabin boy, and Robert, his remarkable parrot, rescue a little American girl from a palace on the Bosporus. Illustrated by Gordon Grant.

***Roller Skates (186 pages)**.....$2.00
by Ruth Sawyer The Viking Press
A book for parents and children to enjoy together, though some ten-year-olds will love to read for themselves about a childhood in New York in the 1890's. Quaint illustrations by Valenti Angelo.

Father's Big Improvements (148 pages).....$1.25
by Caroline D. Emerson Frederick A. Stokes Co.
A father of the 1890's with an incurable zest for trying new things, introduces his family to all the modern conveniences, at times with amusing results.

Listening (158 pages).....$2.00
by Kate Seredy The Viking Press
A charming story, beautifully illustrated by the author, wherein a little girl visits her cousins in the Ramapo Hills and learns, through a story-telling Uncle, of the old Dutch settlers who built his house.

The Strange Pettingill Puzzle (272 pages).....$1.75
by Augusta Huiell Seaman Doubleday, Doran & Co.
Two short mystery stories in which boys and girls solve the problem of missing fortunes.

Susannah, a Little Girl with the Mounties (300 pages).....$2.00
by Muriel Denison Dodd, Mead & Co.
A little girl's spirited and hilarious attempts to become a member of the Canadian Mounted Police, recounted in a gay story with an authentic historical background.

Brown Sails and Silver Guilders (204 pages).....$2.00
by Christiaan van Abkoude Barrows Mussey
Two children and their friends in Volendam. Fishermen, artists and many aspects of Dutch life in a convincing full-flavored story.

Umi (106 pages).....$2.00
by Robert Lee Eskridge The John C. Winston Co.
This fine story of a boy who made Hawaii a united kingdom and became its King, is based upon genuine Hawaiian legend.

***Three Golden Oranges (138 pages)**.....$2.00
by Ralph Steele Boggs and Mary Gould Davis
Longmans, Green & Co.
Ten delightful and little-known stories of old Spain, illustrated by Emma Brock. Good for reading aloud.

Tales from a Finnish Tupa (274 pages).....$2.50
by Dr. James Cloyd Bowman, Margery Bianco, and Aili Kolehmainen Albert Whitman & Co.
A scholarly collection of Finnish fairy tales, fables, and folk lore, recounted with great charm. Beautiful illustrations by Laura Bannon

Albanian Wonder Tales (282 pages).....$2.00
by Post Wheeler Doubleday, Doran & Co.
A distinguished collection of Albanian folk tales, old and new.

Ol' Paul, the Mighty Logger (134 pages).....$2.00
by Glen Rounds Holiday House
Tall tales about the legendary Paul Bunyan which will delight even the most serious-minded child.

***The Reformed Pirate (342 pages)**.....$2.50
by Frank Stockton; selected by Mary Gould Davis
Charles Scribner's Sons
A collection of this famous author's highly imaginative and original tales, whimsical and humorous, selected by a skilled librarian.

***Fierce-Face (78 pages)**.....$1.50
by Dhan Gopal Mukerji E. P. Dutton & Co.
The life story of a baby tiger which gives a rich and vivid picture of the jungle and its lore. Exquisite illustrations by Dorothy Lathrop.

In the Stone Age (362 pages).....$2.00
by Gregory Trent Harcourt, Brace & Co.
A convincing and exciting story with an authentic atmosphere of the life struggle of primitive man.

Tinker of Stone Bluff (318 pages).....$2.00
by Nason H. Arnold Doubleday, Doran & Co.
An extremely interesting and realistic story of a boys' school in Vermont.

Hard Alee! (212 pages).....$2.00
by Nora Benjamin Random House
A lively tale of a cruise with a group of jolly young navigators, familiar with sail-boats and the New England waters. Fine illustrations by the author.

The Keys to the City (264 pages).....$2.00
by Lavinia R. Davis Charles Scribner's Sons
A novel of little-known parts of modern New York, written with enthusiasm and a sense of adventure. Lithographs by Nora Benjamin.

The Covered Bridge (146 pages).....$2.00
by Cornelia Meigs The Macmillan Co.
A winter's tale of a city child of 1800 who found life on a Vermont farm full and exciting. Illustrated by Marguerite de Angeli.

Off to Philadelphia! (214 pages).....$2.00
by Marjorie Hill Allee Houghton Mifflin Co.
A story of two girls who travel from Indiana to Philadelphia in the 1840's. Illustrated by David Hendrickson.

***Mademoiselle Misfortune (268 pages)**.....$2.00
by Carol Ryrie Brink The Macmillan Co.
With France as a background, this story retails the adventures of a young French girl who becomes the traveling companion of an American lady. Illustrated by Kate Seredy.

Phoebe Fairchild (316 pages).....$2.00
by Lois Lenski Frederick A. Stokes Co.
The story of a little New England girl of 1830, told with integrity, humor, and charm. Delightfully illustrated by the author.

Penelope Ellen (300 pages).....$2.00
by Ethel Parton The Viking Press
Three very live little girls of a hundred years ago, against an authentic New England background.

Sword of the Wilderness (160 pages).....$2.00
by Elizabeth Coatsworth The Macmillan Co.
Fourteen-year-old Seth spends an unforgettable year as captive to the Indians in this very fine and exciting tale of Colonial times.

Hoof-Beats of Freedom (236 pages).....$1.75
by Helen Fuller Orton Frederick A. Stokes Co.
The life of 1776 in and about Manhattan well pictured in a slightly rose-hued story of the Revolution, with a patriotic boy hero.

Year of Promise (276 pages).....$2.00
by Adele DeLeeuw The Macmillan Co.
In this young romance, full of the flavor of modern Holland, an American girl visits her father's relations in historic old Haarlem.

Denmark Caravan (198 pages).....$2.00
by Ruth Bryan Owen Dodd, Mead & Co.
A pleasant, unhurried tale of the author's trailer trip through Denmark with her children.

Palaces on Monday (220 pages).....$2.00
by Marjorie Fischer Random House
Soviet Russia seen through the eyes of two American children who have amazing realistic adventures. Illustrated by Richard Floethe.

Mulberry Village (288 pages).....$1.75
by Mary Brewster Hollister Dodd, Mead & Co.
A thrilling and exciting story of Chinese country life, by an author who knows China well.

For Older Boys and Girls

Ages Twelve and Over

Seven Beads of Wampum (298 pages).....$2.00
by Elizabeth Gale G. P. Putnam's Sons
From Old to New Amsterdam move the Van Burgh family and find life in the primitive new land none too easy. A "young" love story and an authoritative picture of the times make this good reading for girls.

***Betsy's Napoleon (274 pages)**.....$2.50
by Jeanette Eaton William Morrow & Co.
The story of thirteen-year-old Betsy Balcombe's friendship for Napoleon, giving a vivid picture of his days in exile on St. Helena.

Beppy Marlowe of Charles Town (282 pages).....$2.00
by Elizabeth Janet Gray The Viking Press
An English girl of the eighteenth century accompanies her brother in his exile to America and finds that the settlement of "Charles Town" holds a full life for them both.

The Gay Chariot (302 pages).....$2.00
by Edith Bishop Sherman Longmans, Green & Co.
The lively experiences of five young people who trek across the continent from Texas to New Jersey in an ancient Ford. Different sections of our country vividly pictured.

McAllister Patrol (292 pages).....$1.75
by Norma Bicknell Mansfield Farrar & Rinehart
Lee, the daughter of a Park ranger, helps to solve a mystery, displaying intelligence and courage. An absorbing story with good Western wilderness atmosphere.

Marian-Martha (258 pages).....$2.00
by Lucile F. Fargo Dodd, Mead & Co.
In this entertaining vocational story, girl chums train to be librarians, eventually finding two very different library jobs.

Peggy Covers the News (270 pages).....$2.00
by Emma Bugbee Dodd, Mead & Co.
A young novel about college and the newspaper world, with a pleasant love story running through it. Told by an experienced newspaper woman.

Sue Barton, Student Nurse (244 pages).....$2.00
by Helen Dore Boylston Little, Brown & Co.
An authoritative account of a hospital nurse's training woven into an interesting story. Told with fine feeling and genuine humor.

***Whistlers' Van (236 pages)**.....$2.00
by Idwal Jones The Viking Press
A well written story of a boy's travels with a gypsy caravan, in search of his grandfather.

***Winterbound (234 pages)**.....$2.00
by Margery Bianco The Viking Press
In the absence of their parents, four young people manage the farm during a Connecticut winter. Recounted with rare spirit in a beautiful book with exquisite illustrations by the author.

All Things New (296 pages).....$1.75
by Sonia Daugherty Thomas Nelson & Sons
Two Russian emigré families face life in New York and solve their problems with courage and zest.

***Challenge (328 pages)**.....$2.00
collected by Helen Ferris Doubleday, Doran & Co.
Stories of love and fortitude by distinguished writers, with a rare and thrilling quality in each.

Flag of the Desert (242 pages).....$2.00
by Herbert Best The Viking Press
Two English boys have thrilling experiences with the natives in mysterious West Africa.

The Scalp Hunters (278 pages).....$2.00
by Hubert V. Coryell Harcourt, Brace & Co.
Blood-curdling excitement with historical background in this eighteenth century story of Indian warfare in Maine. For the older reader.

On the Golden Trail (302 pages).....$2.00
by Hildegarde Hawthorne Longmans, Green & Co.
A thrilling story of the gold rush, authentically told. Fine local color. For the older reader.

Trap-Lines North (268 pages).....$2.00
by Stephen W. Meader Dodd, Mead & Co.
Based on an actual diary, this fine story of the Northern Wilderness gives a true picture of the winter life of trappers.

Ranching on Eagle Eye (374 pages).....$2.00
by Sarah Lindsay Schmidt Robert M. McBride & Co.
An exciting story of the new West in which co-operative cattle marketing is organized despite the scheming opposition of selfish interests.

The Mill in the Woods (234 pages).....$2.00
by William Heyliger D. Appleton-Century Co.
Young Cody turns his boyhood hobby of working with wood into a vocation, establishes a name for craftsmanship and integrity, and finally reaches fame and success.

Spanish Ingots (300 pages).....$2.00
by Commander Edward Ellsberg Dodd, Mead & Co.
An experienced author tells of sunken-treasure-diving and thrills in a submarine in this rousing undersea story.

Head Wind (178 pages).....$2.00
by Hawthorne Daniel The Macmillan Co.
A lively story of land-piracy in a New England sea-coast town of the eighteenth century.

Hurricane Weather (296 pages).....$2.00
by Howard Pease Doubleday, Doran & Co.
A vigorous tale of high adventure. Portrays two white boys among desperate men on a small trading schooner in the South Seas.

Scout to Explorer (240 pages).....$2.00
by Paul Siple G. P. Putnam's Sons
An enthusiastic personal account of Byrd's second expedition to Little America, by the man who was the young "Sea Scout" of the first expedition.

***Liberty or Death (224 pages)**.....$2.00
by Alexander Key Harper & Brothers
An unusual story of the American Revolution which clearly differentiates the various social groups involved and admits the lack of unanimity among the Americans themselves.

***Skyway to Asia (206 pages)**.....$2.50
by William Stephen Grooch Longmans, Green & Co.
Twentieth Century pioneering told by a trail-blazer. An unusual story about the building of air bases for the China Clipper.

Our Navy (188 pages).....$2.00
by Charles J. Finger Houghton Mifflin Co.
A story of our navy, from 1772 to the present, featuring its heroes rather than its battles and achievements.

Twenty Years Under the Sea (320 pages).....$2.50
by J. E. Williamson Hale, Cushman & Flint
Adventures in deep-sea diving and glimpses of the mysterious life on the ocean floor. Illustrated with fifty-four under-sea photographs.

Ten Saints (124 pages).....$2.50
by Eleanor Farjeon Oxford University Press
The legends of the Saints in poetic prose, enhanced by Helen Sewell's beautiful pictures.

***The Poet of Craigie House (238 pages)**.....**$2.50**
by Hildegarde Hawthorne D. Appleton-Century Co.
A biography of Longfellow and a vivid portrayal of the New England background which molded him. Admirably written.

East Way, West Way (194 pages).....**$1.75**
by Baroness Shidzue Ishimoto Farrar & Rinehart
Chapters from the autobiography of a Japanese woman, telling of her girlhood during Japan's transition from feudalism to modernism. Authentic and delightful.

Special Interests

***The Junior Bible (282 pages)**.....**$2.50**
edited by Edgar J. Goodspeed The Macmillan Co.
Extracts from the American translation of the Bible selected for their appeal to young people and printed in attractive modern format. Illustrated by Frank Dobias. 10 to 14.

***Uncle Toby's Christmas Book (284 pages)**.....**$2.50**
illustrated by Julian Brazelton Harper & Brothers
Here is another fine Christmas collection for family use which includes stories, poems, carols, games, recipes and the New Testament account of the first Christmas.

***Sajo and the Beaver People (188 pages)**.....**$2.50**
by Grey Owl Charles Scribner's Sons
A tender and absorbing story of two Indian children and the beaver kittens they raised as pets. Written (and beautifully sketched) by an Indian who writes of his subject with complete authority and fine humor. 8 to 14.

Keema of the Monkey People (120 pages).....**$2.00**
by Walter J. Wilwerding The Macmillan Co.
An extraordinary description of a blue monkey's growth and struggle for existence in a realistic jungle setting. Dramatic illustrations by the author. 10 to 12.

***Carcajou (264 pages)**.....**$2.00**
by Rutherford G. Montgomery The Caxton Printers
The thrilling true story of a wolverine, the Northwoods' cruelest animal. 10 to 14.

Beowulf (292 pages).....**$2.00**
by Ernest Lewis E. P. Dutton & Co.
In this fine story the dog hero, a beautiful, intelligent and courageous police dog, is trained to lead his blind master. 13 and up.

The First Book of the Earth (270 pages).....**$.80**
by Harold Rugg and Louise Krueger Ginn & Company
The earth, its origins and life phenomena, simply presented in an engrossing text book for the young reader. 7 to 9.

Dick and the Spice Cupboard (206 pages).....**$1.75**
by Lucile Saunders McDonald Thomas Y. Crowell Co.
Through the fanciful adventures of a young boy we learn the sources of the spices and their far-flung influence on the history of exploration. 9 to 11.

Tugboat (86 pages).....**$1.75**
by Henry B. Lent The Macmillan Co.
The hows and whys of a tugboat's work, for the fact-loving child. Interesting illustrations by Earle Winslow. 7 to 9.

Turning Night Into Day (119 pages).....**$1.00**
by M. Ilin J. B. Lippincott Co.
The story of lighting, from man's first attempts to his modern achievements with electricity.

***How They Sent the News (254 pages)**.....**$2.50**
by J. Walker McSpadden Dodd, Mead & Co.
Vivid accounts of man's ingenuity in his increasingly successful efforts to improve communication through sound and sight. 10 to 12.

***The Wonder Book of the Air (340 pages)**.....**$2.50**
by C. B. Allen and Lauren D. Lyman
The John C. Winston Co.
Chronological history of famous flying events, with first-hand description of actual flights. 12 to 14.

Fresh and Briny (310 pages).....**$2.00**
by Frances Rogers and Alice Beard
Frederick A. Stokes Co.
A comprehensive and vivid tale of water as friend and foe of mankind–the benefits it confers, the problems it creates and the history it has made; in an unpretentious format. 10 to 12.

***Champions of Democracy (310 pages)**.....**$2.00**
by Joseph Cotter Little, Brown & Co.
Twelve peace-loving American crusaders whose ideals and vision helped mold this country. High School.

Victories of Peace (118 pages).....**$1.00**
by D. M. Gill and A. M. Pullen Friendship Press
In spite of its unpretentious format this little book carries a real message of courage in its eight stories of the men and women who fought the battles of peace. Junior High School.

The Building of America (508 pages).....**$.88**
by Harold Rugg and Louise Krueger Ginn and Co.
Introduction to history and geography with emphasis upon the people and races who have made America.

***Houses in America (240 pages)**.....**$3.00**
by Ethel Fay and Thomas P. Robinson
The Viking Press
An artistic book showing how the early settlers in America adapted their native architecture to their new environment. Profusely illustrated with lovely pencil drawings. High School.

Discovering My Job (174 pages).....**$1.50**
edited by Anne Stoddard Thomas Nelson & Sons
For the enlightenment of adolescent girls, leaders from a dozen occupational fields describe with enthusiasm the opportunities and demands of their vocations. High School.

***You Can Draw (226 pages)**.....**$3.00**
by Frances O'Brien Garfield D. Appleton-Century Co.
An adaptation of the "scribble method" suggestive and stimulating for those who wish to draw. Excellent illustrations help to clarify the instruction.

News Ways in Photography (308 pages).....**$2.75**
by Jacob Deschin Whittlesey House
Many delightful and detailed suggestions for developing a rewarding hobby. High School.

BOOKS OF THE YEAR FOR CHILDREN—1936, a more comprehensive listing of current books, is available at ten cents a copy. A list of the year's Inexpensive Books (under $1.00) has also been prepared; price, five cents. The volumes listed will be on exhibit at Headquarters throughout December.

Book Reviews

First Adventures in Reading. By May Lamberton Becker. Stokes. 1936. 286 pp.

Five Years of Children's Books. By Bertha E. Mahony and Elinor Whitney. Doubleday Doran. 1936. 616 pp.

TWO new books on children's reading have appeared this fall—a recognition by publisher and author of the vital interest evinced in this subject by both parents and educators.

May Lamberton Becker, who has for many years surveyed the field of children's reading with a keen and understanding eye, has given us a new volume *First Adventures in Reading* with a sub-title "Introducing Children to Books." This follows her original *Adventures in Reading* which is addressed to the high school pupil.

In her current volume she addresses herself to the problems of a wider age range, from babyhood to the beginning teens. Her chapters fall into helpful classification—under such delightful headings as *Two Laps and Little Bits, The Fairy Tale Age and Where It May Lead, Lives of Great Men All Remind Us,* and to each is appended a brief list.

One might regret that within these divisions she does not indicate, even approximately, the age range for which some of her titles are best suited. On the other hand, we heartily concur that "every child is a special child in reading as well as in everything else," and it is well that the responsibility of choice rests with the parent. We are grateful, too, that Mrs. Becker hasn't shunned the lure of the "mystery story" nor feared attacking the problem of censorship in the home. Hers is a rich book in which wise guidance and helpful suggestions are presented with a gay zest that is contagious.

Five Years of Children's Books by Bertha E. Mahony and Elinor Whitney, is a supplement to *Realms of Gold* published in 1929, a splendid and much-needed listing of young books. This is intended for a somewhat different purpose, being an annotated catalogue of books published for children in the last five years. How much more than a catalogue it really is can be seen by a glance at the delightful illustrations and the glimpses of authors and of book-making which make the mere perusal of this book a joy. It is a splendid piece of organized reference and should prove indispensable.

MRS. HUGH GRANT STRAUS

In the Magazines

Give Them Freedom to Read. By Josette Frank. Parents' Magazine, November, 1936.

"We can best guide our children's reading if we will let our children's reading guide us." Their own tastes, not ours, must find expression if the reading experience is to have any inner significance. Our function is to help them discover that which they really want. A watchful parent may learn much from his child's choices, finding therein a clue to the emotional needs of the individual. And even when he seems to read too much or too little, the answer lies not in banning books or forcing reading but in patient discovery of the needs which his behavior expresses.

Books to Grow On. By Lena Barksdale. Parent-Teacher Magazine, November, 1936.

Children of today have access to "the most varied and fascinating assortment of books ever offered to boys and girls." Attractive modern reprints of the timeless favorites vie with a wealth of new and excellent material. Book-making itself has improved, and appropriate format and illustrations now help to carry the message of the text. Special interests of all sorts are covered in good books for children of various ages—and stories of real literary merit are available to suit a wide variety of tastes.

When They Want to Know. By Mabel R. Goodlander. Delineator, September, 1936.

There should be in every home a shelf of well-selected reference books for boys and girls to relieve parents of the endless task of question answering and to help inculcate in children independent attitudes toward study and research. A good child's encyclopedia supplemented by some of the attractive "special interest" books now widely available, poetry anthologies, legends, song collections, game books, and directions for making and doing, are among the author's suggestions for such a shelf.

Musical Heights for the Plain Man. By A. D. Zanzig. Recreation, July, 1936.

The author himself is an inspirational leader of group singing—not merely a leader of professional singers. He speaks with genuine enthusiasm of home music. This needs no organization, no officers, and the expense of such a group is negligible. Home singing, however, does need musically capable

leadership, and such leadership is to be found among the many young men and women in schools and colleges. Mr. Zanzig mentions some of the delights of instrumental music making, but he feels that the opportunities in choral music are within easier reach of the plain man.

Mental Attitudes vs. Health. By Dr. Smith Ely Jelliffe. Hygeia, August, 1936.

Certain fixed mental attitudes are capable of bringing about distorted patterns of action in the organs of the body. These attitudes must be recognized for what they truly are, if they are to be changed. Dr. Jelliffe concludes that outside of accidental factors, these attitudes make from 75 to 80 per cent of all the practice of medicine. Only through a study of the unconscious can these mental attitudes be interpreted and clarified.

Tomorrow's Drivers. By Eleanor Everet. Hygeia, July, 1936.

The first of a series on safety, this article emphasizes the need for adequate instruction of young drivers, and tells what forward-looking states are doing in their high schools. It also tells of the work of one investigator who concludes that accidents are usually the result of a state of mind rather than mere speed.

The Preschool Child Who Misbehaves. By Morris Gleich. Hygeia, July, 1936.

"Most cases of misbehavior develop because of a neglect of attention to details. . . . No parent is justified in giving to society an offspring who is a social misfit and who may by his bad habits adversely affect the lives of others. . . . Remember your child is not abnormal; he only needs proper training." The author expands the quoted ideas concretely in a helpful way.

The Open Door. By Marie Butts. Parent-Teacher Magazine, August, 1936.

No country can isolate itself nowadays. If we want peace we must remember that children's early years will determine their future prejudices, so we must scan our own carefully. Also, we must make peace positive, attractive, and an adventure, and we must be willing to pay for it.

Here Is Adventure! By Adelaide Nichols Baker. Parent-Teacher Magazine, August, 1936.

The first need is to recognize adventure—it may look like Joey, the janitor's boy. The second is not to dull it with our caution but to equip our children so ably that they will live all their lives in that eager spirit which so enriches their early years.

OUR PROTECTED CHILDREN

(*Continued from page 77*)

panics which swept over the lands, destroying the savings of years, are omitted or glossed over.

So with the rest of our history. It is difficult to recall a single historical novel for children which interprets the forces in American history as realistically as Huberman's *We the People,* for instance; or a book on the question of slavery, with the possible exception of *Railroad to Freedom,* which would dare to take a stand as positive as that of Harriet Beecher Stowe. Yet while our writers produce pleasant, nostalgic little tales of plantation life, with negroes who stem straight from Uncle Remus, children continue to read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with all its overemphasis and sentimentality.

In our plea for a literature for children deeper in the understanding of our social and economic realities, there will inevitably be those who will fear a return to the moralistic tone and the dual didacticism of some of the children's literature of the past. But is it not reasonable to suppose that a realistic literature can be also rich in imaginative and creative qualities? Need we label as "informational" all books which deal with realities and expect of creative literature nothing but fairy tales and romance?

There is a tradition in English literature which points the way. There was once a great English novelist who cried out against the viciousness and cruelties of the factory age in which he lived. He exposed with determination some of the sorest spots of his civilization. Nothing was too ugly to find a place in his novels—the horrors of child labor, the brutalities of the workhouse, the tragedies of poverty, disease, and death. He took them all, and out of them created something of beauty and of lasting value. Whether or not children of his own day read these books, I do not know, but children read them now, and always will, perhaps, so long as there are people to bring children and books together. What Charles Dickens did for his own times, creative writers for youth might well do for ours. And until we are willing and able to deal with reality in their own books, young people will reach out and find it for themselves in adult literature—bitter and disillusioned, unsuited to their years.

PARENTS' QUESTIONS

(*Continued from page 80*)

ing and who formerly would have turned to hand work or games now turns to the radio. The child who learns more readily through ears than eyes, who in earlier times would have listened with eagerness and profit to father's exploits or grandma's reminiscences, now listens to radio's thrilling tales. It is quite possible that when schools and homes acquire a better understanding of the function of the radio and the type of child it serves, and improve their techniques for guidance, we shall welcome it wholeheartedly as an educational asset rather than liability.

My child goes to a progressive school where fairy tales, I find, are frowned upon. I enjoyed them so very much when I was a child that I can't quite see what harm they can do.

There has been considerable difference of opinion among modern educators concerning the fairy tale. In the past, too, parents and physicians often questioned their value. Children's bad dreams or night terrors were often attributed to their listening to fairy tales. Educators have questioned the effect of fairy tales on the child on the ground that they offer him an escape from reality, that the very spur a child needs to meet life is absent because, in the fairy tale, wishes are fulfilled, the weak inherit the earth, right always triumphs, and wrong is always punished. They have felt that this may influence the child against effort and striving for that which is attainable only through hard work.

Somewhat opposing these two trends of thought on the subject of fairy tales, is the opinion that fairy tales meet a very real need of the child at a given stage of his development. The little child, if only by virtue of size, feels inferior, and therefore insecure, in his relationships with adults. This, no doubt, becomes unbearable at times, varying, of course, with the particular environment and the particular child. We know that children make up their own phantasies of triumphing over adults. Most fairy tales have come down to us because of this very age-old need of the weak to be triumphant, and these old tales are satisfying, too, because they carry with them the flavor of all countries and all climes.

Again, as is so often the case, the answer lies in our own child. If he is healthy and happy most of the time, we need not fear that listening to, or reading fairy tales will have a deleterious effect. With the child who has difficulty in meeting life, nothing is gained by depriving him of this prop; but we must also find ways and means of building up his security and his ability to meet life with greater confidence and joy.

Recently, a guest at my home, in the course of a conversation, used the expression "Joseph's coat." My daughter did not get the reference, and the guest was surprised to find that she had never read or been told Bible stories. Is it important for our children to know these stories? Couldn't they wait and read the Bible as grown-ups?

There are so many charming children's books that one may well ask "Why Bible stories?" The answer is that these old tales have a vitality that keeps them new for every generation. They are heirlooms which we are proud to pass on, not only because of the interest in the tales themselves but also because people have always loved them and have been impressed with their dramatic quality. Above all they have satisfied an emotional need of mankind. The child, too, enjoys the beauty of the biblical language. It is because of our desire to add enriching experiences to our children's lives that we want to include the stories of the Bible. It is also one of the means through which we may expect our children to read the Bible as adults, because they will carry over some of the enjoyment they derived from well chosen Bible stories.*

I am becoming more and more concerned about a problem on which I seem to have reached an impasse. My son is now sixteen. When he was younger, by much persuasion and a bit of bribery, we could get him to read all the literary books prescribed by the school. Now that he is a junior in high school he rebels against the prescribed classics and reads them only under compulsion. His absorbing interest is in biology. Is there anything I might do to arouse his interest in literature?

If our inference is correct, that your son has accepted and adjusted himself to the requirements of the school in the other departments—languages, history, mathematics, and others—could the school be persuaded to ignore his lack of interest in his work in English, at least temporarily? Just removing the pressure that evidently has been applied for many years might remove the strain and help solve the problem.

Are you sure that your prolonged concern about the matter is due to the fact that you think your son will

* A Selected List of Bible Stories is published by the Child Study Association of America.

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be less happy or successful if his knowledge of the classics is limited? May it be also that your traditions will suffer because this boy is not an avid reader? We are probably all agreed that familiarity with the literature of our heritage is of value and yet we may sympathize with this boy's refusal to have what little time he can devote to reading consumed by material outside his own absorbing interest. You may be able, as it were, to "bootleg" some of this other good stuff into his reading. In one such case that I know of the boy's father expressed an interest in rereading some of the classics and proposed to his son that they read these together. Reading thus under happier auspices, the "stint" turned into a satisfying experience, and in regard to certain of the "classics" actually called out appreciation and enjoyment.

READERS' SLANTS

(*Continued from page 83*)

but plunge through the underbrush in an attempt at a short-cut, and pretend they've reached their goal when they really are nowhere at all. They don't care—and, to anyone with any literary feeling at all of the sacredness of truth about human nature, this not caring is sacrilege against the light itself—they simply don't care about making the people in their stories act as people would or could act, so long as they can dangle the moral at the end. But of course since practically everybody, young and old, except professional moralists, does have a keen sense of the sacredness of telling the truth about human nature in stories, by the time such story-tellers reach their moral, they haven't anybody left to dangle it before —except other moralists.

"This is one reason why we all shy off at the mention of stories with morals, although as a matter of fact we read that kind all our lives."

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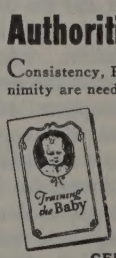

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